The Girl Scouts at Home

Girl Scout Series

Potter

The little procession turned and made its way back to the lunch basket.

Girl Scouts Series, Volume 1

The Girl Scouts at Home

OR

Rosanna's Beautiful Day

BY

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THE
GIRL SCOUTS SERIES

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THE GIRL SCOUTS AT HOME

CHAPTER I

LITTLE Rosanna Horton was a very poor little girl. When I tell you more about her, you will think that was a very odd thing to say.

She lived in one of the most beautiful homes in Louisville, a city full of beautiful homes. And Rosanna's was one of the loveliest. It was a great, rambling house of red brick with wide porches in the front and on either side. On the right of the house was a wonderful garden. It covered half a square, and was surrounded by a high stone wall. No one could look in to see what she was doing. That was rather nice, but of course no one could look out either to see what they were doing on the brick sidewalk, and that does not seem so nice.

At the back of the garden, facing on a clean bricked alley, was the garage, big enough to hold four automobiles. The garage was covered with vines. Otherwise, it would have been a queer looking building, with its one door opening into the garden, and on that side not another door or window either upstairs or down. The upstairs part was a really lovely little apartment for the chauffeur to live in, but all the windows had been put on the side

or in front because old Mrs. Horton, Rosanna's grandmother, did not think that chauffeurs' families were *ever* the sort who ought to look down into the garden where Rosanna played and where she herself sat in state and had tea served of an afternoon.

At one side of the garden where the roses were wildest and the flowers grew thickest was a little cottage, built to fit Rosanna. Grown people had to stoop to get in and their heads almost scraped the ceilings. The furniture all fitted Rosanna too, even to the tiny piano. This was Rosanna's playhouse. She kept her dolls here, and there was a desk with all sorts of writing paper that a maid sorted and put in order every morning before Rosanna came out.

This doesn't sound as though Rosanna was such a poor little girl, does it? But just you wait.

A good ways back of this playhouse was another small building that looked like a little stable. It was a stable — a really truly stable built to fit Rosanna's tiny pony. He had a little box stall, and at one side there was space for the shiniest, prettiest cart.

Rosanna did not go to school. There was a schoolroom in the house, but I will tell you about that some other time. Rosanna disliked it very much: a schoolroom with just one little girl in it! *You* wouldn't like it yourself, would you?

Rosanna's clothes were the prettiest ever; much prettier then than they are now. And such stacks

of them! There was a whole dresser full of ribbons and trinkets and jewelry besides. (Poor little Rosanna!)

She danced like a fairy, and every day she had a music lesson which was given her, like a bad pill, by a severe lady in spectacles who ought never to have tried to smile because it made her face look cracked all over and you felt so much better when the smile was over. Oh, poor, poor, *poor* little Rosanna!

Do you begin to guess why?

You have not heard me say a word about her dear loving mother and her big joky father, have you? They were both dead! This is such a pitiful thing to have come to any little girl that I can scarcely bear to tell you. Both were dead, and Rosanna lived with her grandmother, who was a very proud and important lady indeed. There was a young uncle who might have been good friends with Rosanna and made things easier but she scarcely knew him. He had been away to college and after that, three years in the army. Once a week she wrote to him, in France; but her grandmother corrected the letters and usually made her write them over, so they were not very long and certainly were not interesting.

Mrs. Horton was sure that her son's little daughter could never be worthy of her name and family if she was allowed to "mix," as she put it, with other children. So Rosanna was not allowed to *have* any other children for friends, and Mrs. Horton was too

blind with all her foolish family pride to see that Rosanna was getting queer and vain and overbearing. Every day they took a drive together, usually through the parks or out the river road. Mrs. Horton did not like to drive down town. She did not like the people who filled the streets. She said they were "frightfully ordinary." It was a shameful thing to be ordinary in Mrs. Horton's opinion. She had not looked it up in the dictionary or she would have chosen some other word because being ordinary according to the dictionary is no crime at all. It is not even a disgrace.

Rosanna's books were always about flowers and fairies, or animals that talked, or music that romped up and down the bars spelling little words. There were never any people in them, and if any one sent her a book at Christmas about some poor little girl who wore a pinafore and helped her mother and lived in two rooms and was ever so happy, *that* book had a way of getting itself changed for some other book about bees or flowers the very night before Christmas.

"She will know about those things soon enough," said Rosanna's grandmother.

But every afternoon when they sat in the rose arbor in the middle of the beautiful garden, Rosanna would get tired reading and she would stare up at the clouds and see how many faces she could find.

One day she startled and of course shocked her

grandmother by saying in a low voice, "Dean Harriman!"

"Where?" said Mrs. Horton, staring down the walk.

"In that littlest cloud," said Rosanna, unconscious of startling her grandmother. "It is very good of him, only his nose is even funnier than it is really. Sort of knobby, you know."

"Please do not say 'sort of,'" said Mrs. Horton. "And if you are looking at pictures in the clouds, I consider it a waste of time, Rosanna!"

She struck a little bell, and the house boy came hurrying across the lawn. Mrs. Horton turned to him.

"Find Minnie," she said, "and tell her to send Miss Rosanna a volume of *Classical Pictures for Young Eyes.*"

So Rosanna looked at *Classical Pictures,* and for that afternoon at least kept her young eyes away from the clouds. And never again did she share her pictures with her grandmother.

Rosanna was not a spiritless child, but every day and all day her life slipped on in its dull groove and she did not know how to get out.

Poor little Rosanna! To the little girl behind it, a six-foot brick wall looks as high as the sky. And the garden, as I have told you before, was a very, *very* big garden indeed. Plenty large enough to be very lonesome in.

One morning Mrs. Horton was not ready to drive

at the appointed time. Rosanna was ready, however, and was dancing around on the front porch when the automobile rolled up. She ran toward it but drew back at the sight of a strange chauffeur. He touched his cap and said "Good morning!" in a hearty, friendly way, very different to the stiff manner of the man who had been driving them. Rosanna went down to him.

"Where is Albert?" she asked.

"He does not work here now," said the man. "I have his place."

"What is your name?" said Rosanna.

"John Culver," said the new chauffeur. "What is your name?"

Rosanna frowned a little. She liked this new man with his crinkly, twinkly blue eyes and white teeth. A deep scar creased his jaw, but it did not spoil his friendly, keen face. But chauffeurs usually did not ask her name. There had been so many going and coming during the war. She decided to walk away but could not resist his friendly eyes.

"I am Miss Rosanna," she said proudly.

"Oh!" said the man, and Rosanna had a feeling that he was amused. So she went on speaking. "I will get in the car, if you please, and wait for my grandmother."

He opened the door of the limousine and before she could place her foot on the step, he swung her lightly off her feet and into the car.

"There you are, kiddie!" he said pleasantly, and Rosanna was too stunned to say more than "Thank you!" as the door opened and her grandmother appeared, the maid following, laden with the small dog.

Mrs. Horton nodded to the new man and gave an order as he closed the door.

"Our new man," said Mrs. Horton to Rosanna, then settled back in her corner and took out a list which she commenced to check off with a gold pencil. Rosanna, holding the dog, looked out the windows.

There were children all along the street: little girls playing dolls on front doorsteps and other little girls walking in happy groups or skipping rope. Boys on bicycles circled everywhere and shouted to each other. They made a short cut through one of the poor sections of the city. Here it was the same: children everywhere, all having the best sort of time. They were not so well dressed, that was all the difference. They had the same carefree look in their eyes. Rosanna gazed out wistfully, longingly.

And now you surely guess why Rosanna, with her beautiful home, her pony and her playhouse, her lovely garden, and her room full of pretty things, still was so very, very poor.

Rosanna did not have a single friend.

CHAPTER II

JOHN CULVER brought them home and as they left the car Mrs. Horton enquired, "Is your apartment comfortable, John?"

"Perfectly comfortable, thank you," said Culver.

"You are married?" Mrs. Horton continued.

"Yes," replied Culver.

"Any children?"

"One little girl," said Culver, glancing at Rosanna with a smile.

Mrs. Horton saw the look. She said nothing, but when Rosanna sat before her at the great round table, eating her luncheon, Mrs. Horton remarked, "Of course, Rosanna, you will make no effort whatever to meet the child living over the garage. Unless you make the opportunity, she will never see you, thanks to the arrangement of the windows. She is a child that it would be impossible for you to know."

Rosanna did not reply.

"Rosanna?" said her grandmother sharply.

"Yes, grandmother," sighed poor Rosanna.

After luncheon Mrs. Horton dressed and was driven away to a bridge party. Rosanna practiced scales for half an hour, talked French with her gov-

erness for another long half, and then wandered out into the garden and commenced to wonder about the child over the garage. How old was she? What was she like? Rosanna wished she could see her. There was a rustic seat near the garage and Rosanna went over and curled up on its rough lap. She stared and stared at the garage, but the blank brick walls with their curtains of vines gave her no hint.

It seemed as though she had been sitting there for hours when she fancied a small voice called, "Hello, Rosanna!"

Rosanna sat perfectly still, staring at the brick wall.

"Hello, Rosanna!" said the voice again softly. It was a strangely sweet, gentle voice and seemed to come from the air. Rosanna cast a startled glance above her.

There was a little laugh. "Look in the tree," said the pleasant voice.

Rosanna, mouth open, eyes popping, looked up.

A big tree growing in the alley, close outside the brick wall, leaned its biggest bough in a friendly fashion over Rosanna's garden. High up something blue fluttered among the thick leaves. Then the branches parted, and a face appeared. Rosanna continued to stare.

The little girl in the tree waved her hand.

"You don't know me, do you, Rosanna?" she teased. "But I know you. You are Rosanna Hor-

ton, and you live in that lovely, lovely house and this is your garden. Is that your playhouse over there? And oh, *is* there an honest-for-truly pony in that little barn? Dad says there really is. Is there?" She stopped for breath, and beamed down on Rosanna.

"How did you get up there?" said Rosanna. *She* was not allowed to climb trees.

"Father made a little ladder and fastened it to the trunk with wires so it won't hurt the wood. If Mrs. Horton doesn't mind, he is going to fix a little platform up here. There is a splendid place for it. Then I can study up here where it is all cool and breezy and whispery. Don't you like to hear the leaves whisper? He is going to put a rail around it so we won't fall off."

"Who is *we?*" asked Rosanna. "Have you brothers and sisters?"

"No, I haven't," said the little girl. "Mother says it is my greatest misfortune. She says that I shall have to make a great many friends to make up for it, and that if I don't I will grow selfish. Wouldn't you hate to be selfish? I 'spect you have dozens and *dozens* of little girls to play with. How happy you must make everybody with your lovely garden and things! My mother says that is what things are for: to share with people. She says it is just like having two big red apples. If you eat them both, why, you don't feel good in your tummy; but if you give one to some one, you

feel good everywhere, and you have a good time while you are eating them and get better acquainted, and it just does you good. Do little girls come to see you every day?"

"No," said Rosanna, "I don't know any little girls. My grandmother won't let me."

"Won't *let* you?" said the girl in the tree in a shocked tone. "Why won't she let you?"

"She says I would learn to speak bad grammar and use slang, and grow up to be vulgar."

"Goodness me!" said the stranger. She sat rocking on her bough for a few minutes. Then: "Why would you have to learn bad things of other girls?" she demanded. "I wouldn't let *anybody* teach me anything I didn't want to know. I should think it would be nice to have you teach *them* good grammar if you know it, and not to use slang, and all that. She must think you are soft! My mother says if you are made of putty, you will get dented all over and never be more than an unshapely lump, but if you are made of good stone, you can be carved into something lovely and lasting. But that is just your grandmother," said the girl. "Where is your mother? Is she off visiting?"

"She is dead," said Rosanna. A wave of unspeakable longing for the lost young mother swept over her and her lip trembled as she spoke.

"Oh, poor, poor Rosanna!" said the little tree girl softly. "Oh, Rosanna, I feel so sorry! If you ever want to borrow mine, I wish you would. I

wish you would! My mother says that when a woman has even just one child in her heart, it grows so big that it can hold and love all the children in the world. You borrow her any time you need her, Rosanna!" Then feeling that perhaps the conversation ought to take a livelier strain, she did not wait for Rosanna to answer, but continued, "I wish somebody hadn't built this apartment over your garage so that none of the windows look out on your garden. We are going to hate that, aren't we?"

"Grandmother had it built that way so we would not see the people living there," Rosanna explained.

"Oh!" said the tree girl. "Well, of course you know that *I* live there now. We came two days ago, and my name is Helen Culver. We would love to play together, wouldn't we?"

"Oh, indeed we would!" said Rosanna.

"Well, then we will," said Helen joyfully. "I must go now. I think it is practice time. I will see you after luncheon. Good-bye!" and she slid down the tree and disappeared.

Rosanna went skipping to the house. She was so happy. It was not her practice time, but she was going to practice because Helen was so engaged. Her mind was full of Helen as she sat doing finger exercises and scales. How lovely and clean and bright she looked with her big, blue eyes and blond docked hair! Her teeth were so white and pretty and her voice was so soft and low. And she had a

dimple! It was Rosanna's dream to have a dimple in her thin little cheek.

Rosanna commenced to play scales. She took the C scale — it was so easy that she could think. She was so happy that she played it in a very prancy way, up and down, up and down. Then it commenced to stumble and go ve-ry, v-e-r-y slowly. Rosanna had had an awful thought. The same thought had really been there all the time, but her heart was making such a happy noise that she wouldn't let herself hear it. Now, however, it made such a racket she just had to listen. Over and over with the scales it said loudly and harshly, "Will your grandmother let you play with that little girl who lives over the garage? Will your grandmother even let you *know* that little girl who lives over the garage? Will she? Will she?"

Rosanna Horton knew the answer perfectly well.

CHAPTER III

THE only thing to do, Rosanna decided, was to talk to her grandmother after luncheon when they usually sat in the rose arbor. Rosanna, playing scales, felt quite brave. She would explain everything: how Helen Culver used the best of grammar, and no slang, and climbed trees in rompers and did not scream. Then when she had assured her grandmother of all this, she would tell her quite firmly that she, Rosanna, needed a friend.

It seemed simple and easy, but when luncheon was announced, she decided not to speak until later and when finally they went out to the rose arbor, Rosanna commenced to feel quite shaky and instead of talking she fell into a deep silence.

And then, that minute, that very identical second, something happened that changed everything. A messenger boy came with a telegram. And if it hadn't been for that messenger boy this story would never have happened. If he had been a *slow* messenger boy, half an hour late . . . but he just hurried along on his bicycle and arrived that second. Oh, a dozen things might have happened to delay the boy, but there he was just as Rosanna said, "Grandmother!" in a small but firm voice.

Rosanna said nothing more because her grandmother opened the telegram with fingers that shook a little in spite of her iron will. But as she read it a look of relief and joy lighted her proud face.

"Good news, Rosanna," she said. "The best of news! Your Uncle Robert has reached America!"

"Won't he have to fight any more, grandmother?"

"No; he will come home and be with us. But as I have told you, dear, he was slightly wounded over there in Germany, and I think if I can arrange everything for your comfort, I will go and meet him. He is in New York, and I shall see for myself if he needs any doctoring or care that he could not get here. Then perhaps we will stay at the seaside or in the mountains for a week or so. Would you mind being left with the maids for that long? Perhaps one of your little acquaintances would like to come and play with you once or twice a week."

This was a great privilege in her grandmother's eyes, as Rosanna knew, and she said, "Thank you, grandmother," and started to tell her then and there about Helen. But Mrs. Horton went right on talking.

"Come to my room with me while I pack," she said, rising.

Rosanna did not get a chance to say one word to her. She listened while her grandmother called up an intimate friend who lived near by and arranged for her to come in every day to see how Rosanna

was getting on. She called John in and told him just where he could drive the car when Miss Rosanna took her daily ride. "If she wants to take a little girl friend with her, she is to do so, as I want her to have a good time," Mrs. Horton told him.

When she woke the next morning, Rosanna lay for a long while thinking.

So Uncle Robert had actually come home! And grandmother had gone to meet him! She might be away a week or more. Then her thoughts flew to Helen. Wasn't it too, *too* wonderful? Her grandmother had said quite clearly that one of her little acquaintances might come and play with her.

Usually Rosanna took forever to dress. She was really not at all nice about it. Big girl as she was, Minnie always dressed her, and she would scriggle her toes so her stockings wouldn't go on, and would hop up and down so the buttons wouldn't button. It was very exasperating and she should have been soundly spanked for it: but of course Minnie, who was paid generous wages, only said, "Now, Miss Rosanna, don't you bother poor Minnie that-a way!"

This morning, however, she was out of bed and into the cold plunge without being pushed and she actually *helped* with her stockings. She was ready for breakfast so soon that Minnie said, "Well, well, Miss Rosanna, looks like it does you good to have your grandmother go 'way!"

With one thing and another, she did not get a

chance to go down to the overhanging tree until after luncheon.

She peered eagerly up.

Helen was there, curled up on a big bough, a book in her lap and a gray kitten playing around her.

"Here I am!" said Rosanna, smiling.

"And here am I," answered Helen, smiling back.

"Did you expect me sooner?" asked Rosanna.

"No; I was hoping you wouldn't come. I suppose you never have things to do, but I am a very busy little girl. I help mother, and practice my music, and she is teaching me to sew and cook. Of course we have cooking at school but no one can cook like mother, and I want to be just like her. I told her about you last night, and she said you could borrow her whenever you wanted to."

"I too have things to do," said Rosanna, who felt as though she ought to be of some use since Helen was so industrious. "When I get through with my bath mornings Minnie dresses me—"

"*Dresses* you?" exclaimed Helen in astonishment. "Why, Rosanna, can't you dress yourself?"

Rosanna felt a queer sort of shame. "I never tried," she confessed, "but I am sure I could."

"Of course you could," said Helen briskly. "The buttons and things in the back are hard, but my mother makes most of my things slip-on so I can manage everything. Why don't you try to

dress yourself, Rosanna? You wouldn't want folks to know that you couldn't, would you? Of course you don't mind my knowing, because I am your friend and I will never tell; but you wouldn't want most people to know?"

Rosanna had never thought about it at all, but now it seemed a very babyish and helpless thing. She determined to dress herself in future. To change the subject she said, "Why don't you come down into the garden? I want to show you my playhouse and the pony."

"I'd love to," said Helen, and slid rapidly down the tree and out of sight behind the brick wall.

Rosanna heard her light footsteps running up the stairs leading to the apartment over the garage. She sat down on the rustic seat and waited as patiently as she could. It seemed a long time before Helen appeared at the little gate in the wall.

"Mother thinks that you ought to ask your grandmother if she would like to have me come and see you," she said, looking very grave.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Rosanna. "Grandmother has gone away, and she said the very last thing that I could have somebody come and see me whenever I wanted."

"But did she say me?" Helen persisted. "My father drives for your grandmother and perhaps she may think we are not rich and grand enough for you."

"Why, no, she didn't say *you*. She didn't say

*any*body. She said I might have anyone I like, and I like you. It is all right. You can ask Minnie; she heard her say I could have company. She doesn't know you, you see, so she *couldn't* say that you were the one to come. She told me 'some little girl.'"

"That sounds all right," said Helen. "I will go tell mother. She was not sure I ought to come." She disappeared once more through the little gate, and Rosanna waited. She was not happy. Her grandmother had certainly not named any little girl, but Rosanna knew that she did not mean or intend that Rosanna should entertain the little girl who lived over the garage. Her grandmother thought every one was all right if they belonged to an old family. The first thing she ever asked Rosanna about any little girl was "What is her family?" or "Who are her people?"

Rosanna, whose conscience was troubling her in a queer way, determined to ask Helen about her family, although it seemed that was one of the things that were not very nice to do. But perhaps Helen had a family. In that case she could settle everything happily.

The children joined hands and went skipping along the path toward the playhouse, Helen's bobbed yellow locks shining in the sun and Rosanna's long, heavy, dark hair swinging from side to side as she danced along.

She led the way through the little door into the

little living-room of the playhouse and stood aside as Helen cried out with wonder and pleasure.

"Oh, oh, oh, Rosanna!" the little girl exclaimed. "Oh, it is too dear! May I please look at everything, just as though it was in a picture book?"

Helen moved from one place to another in a sort of daze. She tried the little wicker chairs one after another. She sat at the tiny desk and touched the pearl penholders and the pencils with Rosanna's name printed on them in gold letters. All the letter paper said *Rosanna* in gold letters at the top too; it was beautiful.

The little piano was real. It played delightfully little tinkly notes almost like hitting the rim of a glass with a lead pencil. Helen was charmed. She could scarcely drag herself away to see the other wonders of the playhouse. The little dining-room was built with a bay window, which had a window seat, and a hanging basket of ferns. The little round table, the sideboard and the chairs were all painted a soft cream color, and on each chair back, and the sideboard drawers and doors sprays of tinty, tiny flowers were painted.

Helen hurried from these splendors to the kitchen. And it was a real kitchen!

"If our domestic science teacher could only see this!" groaned Helen.

The room was larger than either of the others, and there was plenty of room for two or three persons, at least for a couple of children and one grown

person if she was not so very large. There was a little gas stove complete in every way, a cabinet, and a porcelain top table, as well as a white sink and draining board. The floor was covered with blue and white linoleum, and the walls were papered with blue and white tiled paper with a border of fat little Dutch ships around the top. Little white Dutch curtains hung at the windows.

"Oh my! Oh my!" sighed Helen. "This is the best of all! The other rooms you can only sit in and enjoy, but here you can really *do* things and learn to be useful."

She opened a little cupboard door and discovered all sorts of pans and kettles made of white enamel with blue edges.

"I never come out here at all," said Rosanna.

"Perhaps they are afraid you will burn yourself," suggested Helen.

"No, the stove is a safe kind, made specially for children's playhouses, but I don't know how to cook, so I don't play in the kitchen at all. Make-believe dinners are no fun."

Helen gave a happy sigh.

"Well, *I* can cook," she said, "and I will teach you how."

"Won't that be fun!" said Rosanna. She suddenly threw her arms around Helen's neck and kissed her. "Oh, Helen, I am so happy," she said.

CHAPTER IV

After Helen had looked the wonderful kitchen over to her heart's content, the children went back to the pretty living-room, where they examined the books in the little bookcase, and then each carrying a comfy wicker chair, went out on the wide porch. A big grass rug was spread there, and there was a little porch swing and a wicker table.

Rosanna commenced to tell Helen about herself. She told much more than she intended, and by the time she had finished, Helen knew more about her new friend than Rosanna's own grandmother had ever guessed.

Helen herself was a very happy, busy little girl, with wise and loving parents. They were poor, and Mr. Culver had very wisely taken the first position that offered as soon as he came home from France and found that the firm he had formerly worked for had given his position to some one else, a man much less capable than Mr. Culver and who worked willingly for wages that Mr. Culver did not feel like accepting. Yes, they were poor, but as Mr. Culver said, "Just you wait, folkses; this will be fun to remember some day." And Mrs. Culver called it "our school" and told Helen that they must both strive to know the best and easiest way

of doing everything while they had to do all for themselves.

Helen's eyes filled with tears when she heard of the death of Rosanna's young father and mother in a railroad accident when she was such a little thing that now she could scarcely remember them.

"And then you came to live with your grandmother?" she said, struggling not to go to Rosanna and hug her tight. A little girl without mother or father! It was too dreadful.

"Yes, she came to the hospital and as soon as I was well — I was just scratched up a little — she brought me here."

"Well," said Helen briskly, "it must be fine to have a grandmother. I suppose grandmothers are 'most exactly as good as mothers," she went on, trying to make light of Rosanna's misfortune. "I expect they cuddle you and play with you and hold you 'most exactly like mothers."

"Mine doesn't," said Rosanna sadly. "She kisses me good-night; at least she holds her cheek so I can kiss *her,* but she never plays with anybody. And she never holds me: she says I am too big to get on people's laps. But I guess I must have been a big baby because she never did hold me even when I was little. There must be different kinds of grandmothers."

"A little girl I know has one, and my grandmother says that it is a disgrace the way she spoils that child, and she says she wants me to grow up

to be an honor to our house. You see I am the only grandchild there is.

"Grandmother had a daughter long ago, but she died when she was only two, and grandmother was married twice and both her husbands died."

"You seem to have quite a dying family," said Helen politely.

"Yes, we have." Rosanna commenced to feel quite proud of the fact now that Helen had mentioned it.

"I have an uncle too, and he 'most died over in France but he is home now."

"My father was there too," said Helen proudly. "He had to give up everything to go, but mother wouldn't let him say that he had to stay home and work for us so he went. Mother went to work typewriting and we lived in three rooms, and I went to school and cooked our suppers at night. Mother used to come home so tired. After the dishes were washed, we used to sit and knit. I learned to knit without looking on, so I could knit and study all at the same time. You are the only friend I have here in Louisville," concluded Helen, "but of course when school begins I will have lots of them."

Rosanna was conscious of a jealous pang. She didn't want this bright-eyed little girl who had just come into her life to have other friends.

"I don't see why you have to have other friends if you have me," she said. "Why can't we play together all the time, and have good times? My

grandmother said I was to take you riding every day, and we can have such fun. If you have a lot of other friends, Helen, you won't come here at all."

"Why, yes, I will, Rosanna! You will be my bestest friend of all. But mother says we all need a number of people in our lives because if we don't we will all get to thinking the same things and talking the same way, and it is very bad for us."

"Well, I can't have any," said Rosanna hopelessly. "I told you that before. I suppose if she hadn't had to go to New York, I would never have had you for a friend. That is the way my grandmother is."

"Oh, well," said Helen, "when she gets back we will explain things to her, and I am sure she will get to understand all about things. Why, you just *have* to have friends, Rosanna, and I want you to have me if you think you like me enough."

"Oh, I do; indeed I do!" cried Rosanna. "I just can't stand it if she doesn't let me have you! We will have such good times, Helen, and I can learn to cook, and we can learn to play duets together and it will be such fun."

"I should say so!" said Helen happily. "And don't you think it would be fun to see what all we can do for ourselves? I mean without asking Minnie. I am sure mother would think it would make us sort of helpless. Of course she is your maid, and if you would rather have her to do things for you —"

"No; let's do everything ourselves," said Rosanna, eager to please, and with a feeling that with someone to enjoy it with her the task would be a pleasure.

"I tell you what, Helen, until school opens I can be your very best friend, and you can play with me 'most all the time, and we will be so happy."

Minnie watched them from a side window in the big house but they did not see her. Minnie was pleased. She had heard what Mrs. Horton had said about some child coming to play with Rosanna. Minnie being wiser than Rosanna and grown up, knew very well that Mrs. Horton did not mean Helen Culver. But Minnie had had one or two disastrous experiences with the children who went to the very select dancing school with Rosanna, and the quiet, pretty, well-behaved girl playing there in the garden seemed almost too good to be true. She had never seen Rosanna look so well and so happy. She was glad to see the chauffeur's child "makin' good" as she expressed it. Minnie's young man had also returned from overseas and she was sewing every spare moment on things for her own little house and for herself. If Rosanna had a chance to play all day every day for a whole week, or as long as Mrs. Horton stayed away — and Minnie piously wished her a long trip — why, she could be ready for the young man and the little house just that much sooner.

As soon as this most splendid thought found its

way into Minnie's mind she commenced to make plans to help the children, and as the first one occurred to her she put her work in her pocket and hurried across to the playhouse, where she fairly gasped at the sight of Rosanna awkwardly but cheerfully sweeping leaves and stems off the porch while Helen shook the rugs.

"Time for you to dress for the evening, Miss Rosanna," she said. "And wouldn't you like to invite Miss Helen over to supper, and have it served here on your own porch?"

"Oh, wouldn't that be fun?" cried Rosanna "Wouldn't you like that, Helen?"

"Indeed I would!" said Helen. She jumped off the porch and looked to see if the rug was straight. "I will go right home and ask my mother and if I don't come straight back and tell you, you will know that I can come to supper." She ran off, returning just at supper time.

Minnie served the meal and it was all as delicious as a party. Even the cook was glad to see Rosanna really happy. And after the last bit of the dessert, a pink ice-cream, had been slowly eaten, the two little girls sat talking in quite a grown-up manner.

Presently Helen's bright eyes spied a lady at the other end of the garden.

"Someone is coming!" she exclaimed.

"That is a friend of grandmother's. She is coming over every day to see how I am getting along."

"Good-evening, Rosanna," said the lady. "I think this looks as though you were having a very nice time indeed."

"We are, Mrs. Hargrave," said Rosanna. "This is my friend, Helen Culver."

Helen curtseyed.

"How do you do, Helen," said Mrs. Hargrave. "The Culvers of Lee County, I suppose. A fine old family, my dears. As good as yours, Rosanna. Well, well, I am glad you are both having a nice time! If you want anything of me, Rosanna, telephone me and I will be over every day. You little girls must both come and have luncheon with me some day." She bade them good-night and walked off, feeling that she had done her whole duty.

"It is time for me to go home," said Helen. "I didn't practice my half hour this evening, so I must go and do it now."

"I didn't practice either," said Rosanna. "I want to work hard at my music if we are to play duets. I don't want to be the one who always has to play secondo. Besides, I have a bee-*u*-ti-ful secret for tomorrow."

CHAPTER V

WHEN Rosanna went to bed that night she commenced by sitting down on the floor and taking off her own socks and slippers. Then while Minnie stood looking at her in pleased surprise, she carefully took off her hair ribbon and folded it up!

"Minnie," she said, "have you any little girls in your family?"

"Yes, Miss Rosanna, ever so many."

"As little as me?" pursued Rosanna.

"Some littler, and some just about like you, and some larger."

"Well," said Rosanna, "do they most of them dress and undress themselves?"

"Indeed yes!" said Minnie. "They would get good and spanked if they tried any funny work with their mothers. Not that it's not all right, Miss Rosanna, for you to be cared for, but land, my sisters are all too busy to bother! And besides, those children have got to learn to do for themselves sooner or later, and the sooner the better. And I will say, Miss Rosanna, good wages nor anything will *ever* make me think it is a good thing to have my babying you along as big as you are. I don't see why I can't earn my money just as honest and give just as much work for it by

learnin' you to stand on your own feet, as you might say."

"Well," said Rosanna wisely, "let's make a game of it, Minnie. While grandmother is away, play you are working for *me* and teach me to be like your little girls."

"Bless your heart!" said Minnie tenderly. "I have feelings, you will find, Miss Rosanna, if I *am* only a maid, and I certainly do think you are a dear child. Whatever gets some of the queer ideas in your head I don't know!"

"Why, my little new friend Helen Culver dresses herself and combs her own hair and everything. And all your little girls in your family fix themselves, and when I told Helen that you dress me she looked sort of funny. Then suppose you had to go away for awhile, what would I do? None of the other maids know where my things are and, besides, I don't like to have anyone but you fix me and button me up. You are real kind and soft when you touch me, Minnie. I think you try to be a mother to me."

To Rosanna's horror, Minnie burst into tears.

"Oh, the saints forgive me!" she sobbed. "To think you have thought of that and me dressin' you half the time that rough and sudden! Oh, Miss Rosanna dear, just you take notice of me after this!"

"Why, I don't need to," said Rosanna. "You *are* good to me, and if you will, just play you work

for me and show me where my things are and how to do things. Helen is going to teach me to cook if you will come sit in the kitchen and I am going to see if Mrs. Culver will show me how to sew."

Minnie sniffed. "If she can beat me sewin'," she said scornfully, "she's beatin' me at my own game. I learned of the nuns in the convent school where your stitches has to be that small you can't find 'em. You just let me help with your sewin', dearie."

"That will be fine," said Rosanna, dancing up and down. "Oh, I do wish grandmother was going to stay away longer than a week! That's such a short time to learn everything in, I don't see how I can do it all."

"Nor I," said Minnie. "And I sure do wish the same for your grandmother, that she will treat herself and Mr. Robert to a good long trip. She don't stay away enough for her own good, I say. Well, wishing never does much good. All we can do is just put in all the time we can, Miss Rosanna, and we will do exactly what you say. We will make a play of it and I will start this very minute. You will find your clean night dress in the left hand end of the second drawer of your dresser."

"Here it is," said Rosanna a moment later. "What a lot of them I have! Do I need such a big pile, Minnie?"

"Well, not really, Miss Rosanna. You outgrow them mostly."

"Then we won't get any more for a long, long time," said Rosanna. "Minnie, what do you think about my hair?"

"I will have to comb that for you, dearie; it is so very long and thick."

"I was thinking," said Rosanna slowly, "about docking it. It is a great bother."

"Oh, my sufferin' soul!" cried Minnie, with a face of horror. "Oh me, oh my! Don't you think of that ever again, Miss Rosanna! If anything in the *world* happened to your hair, well, I don't want to think what your grandmother would do to me. Your hair is her pride and glory. It is the only thing I ever heard her brag about. 'You can tell Rosanna in a crowd as far as you can see her,' says she, 'by her hair; just that dark color full of streaks of gold like, and curls at that.' No, Miss Rosanna, you can learn to sew and cook and take care of yourself, and not much harm done for her to fret about, but for *mercy's* sake don't you go touching your hair."

"Well, it *is* a bother," said Rosanna, "but we will let it alone for awhile. Now you must come and wake me early, Minnie, and bring your sewing so you can sit here and tell me when I don't do the right thing. After breakfast, if cook will give us some things, I will get Helen and we will do some baking. Won't that be fun? And in the afternoon I am going to give Helen and you a surprise"

"Me too? Do you mind if Minnie kisses you good-night, dearie?" she asked softly.

Rosanna sleepily held up her arms. "Oh, I wish you would, Minnie! It is so nice to have somebody want to kiss me without my asking them to do it."

Minnie kissed her tenderly. "Bless you, dearie, old Minnie will kiss you good-night every night!"

She turned out the light and snapped on the electric fan.

And at once, it seemed to Rosanna, it was morning. There must have been some time between, however, because Minnie went and looked over all her things, and rejoiced to think what great progress she could make on her wedding things in a week if she didn't have to wait on Rosanna all the time, and after she had put everything back in the trunk and locked it up as though it was the greatest treasure in the world, she went down to see the cook. She told her all about what Rosanna had planned, and the cook listened and sniffled and blew her nose hard several times and then got up and brought out a big basket. This she set on the kitchen table and commenced to fill with any number of things: salt and pepper and flour and spices and baking powder and raisins, and all sorts of things. The next morning when Rosanna went into the playhouse kitchen for a look on her way to call Helen, there was everything any little girl would possibly need to cook with, all arranged in

rows on the shelves of the tiny cupboard. And wonder of wonders, just inside the door was a little ice-chest.

"Oh, oh! Where did that come from?" cried Rosanna, clapping her hands and running to open it.

"Cook found it in the store room," said Minnie, smiling. "It was the one they used in your nursery when you were a baby. She cleaned it all out, and I think you will find something in it besides ice."

Sure enough there *was* something besides ice, but Rosanna took one little glance and then ran like the wind for the kitchen, where she burst upon the astonished cook, and reaching as far around her as her short arms would go, hugged her hard. Then she ran to the brick wall and called Helen.

It seemed about a second before the two children were in the playhouse kitchen, aprons on, and hard at work.

Minnie was made superintendent and sat sewing in a wicker chair beside the table, where she could give advice. Helen was chief cook and Rosanna was assistant — the most delighted and thrilled assistant that ever beat an egg or stirred a batter. By eleven o'clock the cooking was done and every pot and pan washed and put in its place. Helen said that was the rule in domestic science school, so although they were both tired with their labors and Rosanna wished in her heart that she could

tell Minnie to clean up as she usually did whenever a mess was made, they stuck to their task and it did not take very long to finish the work and make the kitchen all spick and span.

Rosanna was conscious of a new feeling, a sort of glow, at her heart. Never before in her life had she spent a really useful morning. She had learned to cook several things, and had the best time she had ever had in her life.

"What shall we have? A party?" asked Helen, sinking down in one of the wicker chairs.

Rosanna laughed. "Now I am going to tell my surprise, Minnie," she said. "But when I made it up I didn't think we would help with it ourselves. No, indeed; I thought you and cook would have to do it all, and we would just sit around." She laughed. "I think it would be loads of fun to take our cookies and the jello we made, and make some sandwiches of the cold meat cook put in our icebox, and pack the lunch hamper just as though we were grown up, and fill the thermos bottles with milk, and go to Jacobs Park for supper to-night."

Helen gave a scream of delight. "Oh, splendid!" she cried, "I have not been out there yet, and dad says it is perfectly beautiful — just like real country."

"Don't you suppose your mother would like to go, Helen?" asked Rosanna.

"Of course she would!" said Helen promptly,

"but she has gone to Jeffersonville and will not be back until to-morrow morning. It was nice of you to think of her, Rosanna."

When the hamper was packed to their satisfaction, they called Minnie back to see if they had forgotten anything.

"Why, who's going, Miss Rosanna?" asked Minnie, looking into the basket with much surprise.

"You and Mr. Culver and Helen and me," said Rosanna wonderingly.

"Well, dearie, whatever are you going to do with all these things to eat?" said Minnie. "This basket holds enough for eight grown people, and you have packed it full."

"I think we can eat it by supper time," said Rosanna. "You have no idea how good those cookies and things are. Do you think we have forgotten anything, Minnie?"

"Where is the corkscrew for your olive bottle?" said Minnie. "And what are all those little bundles?"

"Hard boiled eggs," said Helen.

"Have you put in salt and pepper for 'em?"

"I don't believe we have," said Rosanna. She ran to get some.

"What is in that dish?" Minnie went on relentlessly.

"Salad, and the other one has fruit jello."

"They won't ride very well, I am fraid," said Minnie. Then seeing a look of disappointment in

the children's faces she hastened to add, "Well, I say that is a grand supper, and cook never did a bit better for Mr. Robert when he was home and used to give motoring parties. Now I have a plan myself. Both you children go and take a nap. Please do that for Minnie, Miss Rosanna."

Rosanna was sure she could not sleep, but about one minute later she was dreaming of dinner parties and kitchens. When she woke up it was three o'clock and Minnie was shaking her gently.

Rosanna was off the bed like a shot. She had just reached the porch when Helen came running up, dressed plainly and sensibly in a plain dark gingham and sandals.

"The car is all ready," she said, "and daddy is driving it around to the front door. And oh, he thinks he can't stay with us. He has so much studying to do he is going to leave us there with you, Minnie, and come for us whenever you say."

"Well, that's all right," said Minnie. "Only now that makes three to eat all that supper."

Rosanna picked up her cape and a thermos bottle and skipped down the broad steps after the house boy, who carried the heavy lunch hamper.

"Never you mind, Minnie," she said. "Wouldn't you be s'prised to see us eat every bit of it?"

"No, I wouldn't," said Minnie firmly. "I'd be *scared.*"

CHAPTER VI

Driving through the winding roads of beautiful Iroquois Park, or Jacobs Park as it is better known to the people of Louisville, they found a lovely glade where the grass was smooth and where the trees grew close all about. They were screened from the passersby, and it looked as though the little place had just been waiting for a couple of little girls to come there and enjoy a treat.

For a long time they played while Minnie sat comfortably at the foot of a tree and sewed on one of her doilies. Suddenly they were interrupted by the sound of crying.

Both girls stood motionless in amazement. Minnie put down her work. The crying continued. It was no feeble wail, but a good hearty roar with a running accompaniment of sobs in another key. Two children were being as miserable and unhappy as they knew how. As they came close to the leafy screen that protected Rosanna and Helen, the girls were able to see as well as hear the sobbing pair.

The most noise was made by a chubby, red-faced little fellow wearing a cap. He was dragging an empty box by a string, like a little wagon, and his roars did not prevent an air of lively interest in his

surroundings. His face was tear streaked, and he cried with the air of one who never intends to stop. A girl, rather smaller, followed. She clutched her brother firmly by the back of the blouse and allowed him to drag her forward.

Her eyes were screwed tight shut, her head was thrown back and she shuffled along, the very picture of woe. Three other children completed the mournful group. A larger girl, who staggered along under the weight of the fat baby she was carrying, and another small boy who stalked along, scowling unhappily, but with firm steps and squared shoulders as though he would not let himself be overcome by misfortune.

"Oh, oh, *oh!*" cried the little girl. "Oh, oh, *oh!*" It seemed all she could say.

"L—let l-loose of me!" roared the boy whose blouse she was clutching.

"Please stop your crying," begged the older girl, setting the baby on his feet and shifting him to the other arm. "The police will come if you don't."

"I don't care! Ow, ow, ow!" yelled the boy.

Rosanna backed up to Minnie and stood there quite overcome. Not so with Helen, however. After a good look, she pushed through the leafy screen, jumped down the low bank and proceeded to ask questions. At the sound of her voice the small girl opened her eyes and her sobs dwindled to a steady sniffle. The boy stopped instantly. He looked ashamed. The big girl once more put

down the baby, setting it on the bank, and the boy who had not cried stared off down the road, never giving Helen a glance. Presently the girl sat down with the baby and Helen dropped down beside her. Rosanna was filled with curiosity.

"I am going down to see what it is all about," she said to Minnie.

"Don't go too close, dearie; you might catch something," said Minnie, intent on her cross-stitching and not caring much what the matter was.

Rosanna slipped shyly down the bank and stood beside Helen.

"She is telling me about it," said Helen, turning to Rosanna. "She earned the carfare to bring them out here for the afternoon by digging weeds on lawns. Go on!"

"Well," said the strange girl, "we took the car, and got out here, and I had to carry the baby and help Luella there, so I couldn't carry anything else. And Tommy wanted to carry the supper because he said he was the biggest, and he wouldn't let Myron even take hold of the basket. And when we got off the car Luella fell down and bumped herself, and the car went off, and then I asked Tommy where was the lunch, and he had left it on the car! He always forgets everything. I oughtn't to have let him have it, but, you see, I had the baby and had to help Luella. Tommy wanted to run after the car, but it was 'most out of sight. He couldn't ever catch it."

"So that's all the trouble. They want their supper, and there isn't any. I have a bottle of milk in my bag for the baby, but that is all there is except carfare home, and I'm sorry but p'raps next time Tommy will think how he leaves good suppers on street cars. We were going to have bread and butter and doughnuts and three plums apiece."

At the mention of the lost feast, Tommy burst out with even greater noise. Luella's eyes closed and her sniffles changed to a low howl.

"I'm hungry!" roared Tommy. "I didn't go to lose the supper. I gotta have sumpin' to eat!"

"No, you haven't either," said the girl. "You haven't got to have anything to eat any more than Myron has. Why don't you act like Myron? I'd be ashamed of myself, and you a whole year older!"

"That's just it!" said Tommy, stopping long enough to talk. "Myron's littler and thinner, and he don't need it so much."

"Well, I bet he does!" said his sister. "Now you come along down to the playgrounds, and you can each have a good big drink of water and then you won't mind missing your supper."

She stood up wearily and shouldered the baby. She was a sweet looking little girl, but careworn as though she had carried the baby most of his life. And so she had. The other children started down the road, Tommy and Luella silent for the time. It had been a comfort to tell their troubles to someone.

"Good-by," said the strange girl, smiling over her shoulder. She kissed the baby. "Shake a paddy good-by," she said, and a little dimpled hand wagged a farewell at Rosanna and Helen.

"We're very sorry," said Helen. "Good-by!"

"Good-by!" echoed Rosanna.

They scrambled up the bank and stopped, staring. In the middle of the grassy lawn that they had chosen for their picnic ground stood the lunch hamper. It looked as big as a house!

"Bread and butter and three plums apiece," said Helen under her breath.

"Bread and butter and three plums apiece," echoed Rosanna. "Helen," she said solemnly, "this is the reason we packed such a lot of lunch. Come on!" She turned and dashed down the bank and along the shady road. For the first time in her life Rosanna was doing something that had not been suggested to her; something that was out of the regular order of things. She did not ask herself if the children belonged to nice families. She rather knew they had no family at all in the sense her grandmother always used. She did not stop to remember how shocked and horrified her grandmother would be if she could see her racing along trying to overtake the grubby little group of poor children. With Helen close behind, she skimmed around the first curve and spied them ahead.

Rosanna and Helen commenced to call and wave their arms. The girl heard and once more set down

the baby. Tommy heard and squeezed out a louder howl. Luella opened her eyes. Myron glanced at them and again turned away and stared down the road. Rosanna and Helen dashed up.

"We want you to come and have supper with us," said Rosanna, with her sweet smile. "We have a lovely supper and we cooked most of it ourselves, and we brought a whole hamper full."

Tommy shut up suddenly. This was something he could not afford to miss hearing. Luella showed that her eyes could open and be very large and round indeed.

"I don't feel we had better," said the older girl slowly. She certainly looked very tired.

"Oh yes, you must!" said Rosanna. "The basket holds just enough for eight people — grown-up people at that; and there are only three of us. Minnie thought we were crazy to pack so much, but the things looked so nice when they filled the boxes cramful. *Please* do come!"

"I don't know," she said hesitatingly.

Helen looked at her and made a sign that Rosanna did not see. Then "I *thought* you were a Girl Scout," she said. "Now that makes it all right for you to come to us because, as you see, I am a Girl Scout too, and you know we must serve each other when in need."

A look of pleasure lighted the girl's face.

"Why, if you are sure there is enough," she said. "I am so tired carrying the baby, it would

seem good just to sit down and rest awhile. But Tommy eats a lot."

"We don't mind that," said Rosanna. "I don't want a single bit of that supper left to carry home."

The little procession turned and made its joyful way back to the lunch basket.

Rosanna and Helen seated their little guests, and Minnie, her kind heart touched by the tired face and drooping shoulders of the little girl who had carried the heavy baby so far, took the child and commenced to play with it.

The girls spread the paper lunch cloth smoothly on the ground and commenced putting the food on the table. Tommy stared with round eyes. Myron glanced at the feast and then looked away while, to everyone's astonishment, Luella commenced to cry.

"My land of love, what's the matter now?" said Minnie, speaking over the head of the baby, who nestled happily in her lap.

Everybody looked at Luella who mumbled something and sobbed right along.

"What does she say?" asked Helen.

The older girl looked dreadfully embarrassed.

"I'm so ashamed of her," she exclaimed in a low tone. "She does think up such dreadful things! She is crying because those plums are green, and she knows I won't let her eat any."

"Plums?" said Helen and Rosanna together.

"Over there," cried Luella, sniffling and pointing.

Both girls began to laugh, then stopped as they noticed the unhappy look on the large girl's face.

"I don't wonder she thinks those are plums," said Helen. "I thought they were plums when I was little and always called them plums long after I knew they were olives. Here, Luella, you can eat one now if you wish, but I don't believe you will like them at all. I didn't when I was little."

Luella took the offered dainty and popped it into her mouth. She managed to eat it, although she made awful faces. Tommy, watching her, did not ask for a serving.

"Can I help?" said the strange girl politely. "I wish you would let me. I would feel better to do something when you are going to give us such a perfectly lovely supper."

"Please sit still and rest," said Rosanna, smiling. "You want to feel real good and hungry when supper is ready, and I am sure you must be tired nearly to death. And if you would tell us your name. . . . We know which is Tommy, and Myron, and Luella, but we don't know the baby's name, nor yours."

"The baby is little Christopher," said the guest, reaching over to pat the little hand, "and my name is Mary. You are Rosanna and you are Helen, and I heard them call you Minnie."

"Perfectly right," said Minnie. "Will it hurt the baby to crawl around on the grass?"

"Oh, no, indeed," said Mary. "He crawls all

over. He gets some dreadful tumbles but he never cries. He has fallen out of bed so many times that we keep the floor all covered with pillows in front of the bed, and last week he fell down the cellar stairs. Tommy forgot and left the door open."

"My good land, didn't it kill the poor child?" asked Minnie.

"No, there was a bushel basket partly full of potatoes on the landing, and he fell into those and never hurt himself at all. He didn't even cry but a minute. He is the best baby we have ever had."

"My land, you poor chicken, you!" said Minnie. "You talk like you was the mother of the whole bunch!"

"I help a lot with them," said Mary simply, "and I guess they are 'most as much mine as mother's. You see she works and somebody has to take care of them. And it isn't such very hard work, especially since I joined the Girl Scouts. All the girls are so good, and have such a lot of good times, and oh, it makes everything different!"

"What are Girl Scouts?" said Rosanna. Both girls looked at her in amazement. "I know what Boy Scouts are," she said hastily, "but I never heard of Girl Scouts."

Helen patted her on the arm. "Well, Rosanna, some day I will tell you all about them, but now we must hurry and get the rest of the things on the table because I don't think Tommy will ever live if he has to wait much longer."

"I know Myron is awfully hungry too," said Mary, smiling at her little brother. "He never says a word, but I can tell what he thinks. Myron is such a help to me. He is just as good at remembering things as Tommy is at forgetting them."

"He helped to forget the lunch," said Tommy.

Myron spoke up in self-defence. "No, I didn't! I was helping Mary pick up Luella and I thought you had it. You had it the last I saw."

"I put it down after that," said Tommy as though that explained everything.

"I think I will lay the baby down beside this tree and let him have his bottle," said Mary. "That will keep him quiet all the time we eat."

"Wait a minute until we fix a nice place," said Minnie. She brought a couple of auto robes and made a smooth, soft bed under the tree.

"There he is!" she said. Mary, who had been unwrapping wads of newspapers, produced a bottle of milk which she gave the baby. He settled down to a quiet enjoyment of his meal, and Mary sighed as she sat down at the edge of the tablecloth.

"I *do* hope you won't mind if I look at everything," she said. "I never *saw* so many *lovely* things in my life even in a delicatessen window."

CHAPTER VII

THE children, very, very solemn but oh so thrilled, seated themselves on the grass and silently accepted the plates of good things that Helen and Rosanna dished out for them. It is to be said for the everlasting credit of the jello that it did *not* melt, and the salad *did* ride well, although Minnie had gloomily expected it to be "all over the place" as she expressed it.

How those children did eat! Commencing with the ham sandwiches and the lettuce and egg sandwiches, and the cold hard-boiled eggs, and crackers and olives, and fruit salad, and very, *very* thin iced tea with lemon in it, and jello for dessert!

About half way through the smaller children commenced to thaw out and lose their shyness, and talk. *How* they did talk! Myron said nothing (but that was expected of Myron). When at last Rosanna was tipping up the second thermos bottle to see if there was a drop of tea left, and they were all eating the last cookies very, very slowly, partly to make them last and partly because they were so full and comfortable, Rosanna happened to notice Myron. She motioned to Helen to look. Myron had not eaten everything. He had slyly lifted the tablecloth and had hidden under it a ham

sandwich rather nibbled as to edge, a small pile of cookies (his share) and his plate of jello, which he had slipped off on a paper napkin.

"He couldn't eat all his supper, and he is afraid we won't like it," whispered Rosanna.

"I am going to ask him," said Helen. She stepped over to the boy, who was sitting close to his little pile of goodies as though trying to hide it. "Couldn't you eat all your supper?"

Myron nodded.

Mary glanced quickly at her brother, and said, "Why, Myron, *whatever* are you trying to do?"

Tommy piped up. "I guess he's going to take 'em home to eat on the way."

"I am *not!*" said Myron hotly, stung into self-defence as usual by his brother. "I am *not!* Going to take it home to mamma and Gwenny. I haven't had a speck more'n my share. I counted every time, and everybody had four cookies 'cept Tommy. He had six. And I saved my sandwich out, and the jell!"

Tears stood in Mary's eyes. "But it isn't polite, Myron, to take anything away without asking and, anyway, I know mamma and Gwenny will be satisfied to just hear about our good time, and they wouldn't want you to do such a thing." She tried to put the cookies back on the table but Myron clung to them stubbornly.

"No, no!" he said. "They are *my* things! I went without 'em, and I want to take them home

to mamma and Gwenny. Gwenny never had any cookies like those. And the jell is so pretty. I put a egg in my pocket too." Myron's lip trembled, but he did not cry although Tommy giggled openly.

"Of course you shall take them home to your mother! Who is Gwenny — your dog?" asked Rosanna.

"Gwenny is my *sister!*" said Myron furiously.

Rosanna felt that she always said the wrong thing.

"Oh, excuse me, Myron," she said meekly.

A shade of sorrow passed over Mary's bright little face as she said, "Gwenny can never go anywhere with us. She is sick, and never goes anywhere."

"Sick in bed?" questioned Rosanna.

"No, she has a wheel chair, and when her back doesn't hurt too much, she can be wheeled around the house and sometimes out in the yard. But she wouldn't want Myron to do anything like this, so rude."

"But Gwenny never *had* any cookies as good as those, and the jell is so pretty!" repeated Myron stubbornly.

"I think it is so nice of you, Myron," said Rosanna. "I wish I had known about Gwenny too so I could have saved her some of my cookies. Let me help you do them up. You can take them to her just as you meant to, and I know she will like them because her little brother went without to save

some for her. And some day soon, Myron, we will bring her a whole picnic for herself, and perhaps she will ask you to help her eat it."

"I'll help her too," said Tommy, puffing up his chest. "I'd just as soon!"

Minnie, bending over the hamper, whispered to Rosanna, "I'll bet he'll help her! My, my, how I do want to fix that boy! I wish my third sister from the oldest, Louisa Cordelia, had him for a while. I reckon one day with her would make him feel different on a good many subjects. Little pig!" Minnie's eyes snapped.

Rosanna laughed. "I suppose he doesn't know any better, Minnie."

"Know any better? Well, Miss Rosanna, Myron didn't need any help about remembering his poor hard-worked mother and his sick sister. I don't doubt Mary thought of 'em too, but she was too polite to say a word after all you have done for them. But poor little Myron didn't know it wasn't polite, so he just goes ahead and keeps part of his treat. If there are any cookies in Master Tommy's pockets, they will never get as far as his house."

"Well, I think he *is* selfish," said Rosanna regretfully. "But, Minnie, we must take some good things to that Gwenny. I think grandmother would want me to."

After the supper things were all packed away in the hamper, everybody sat around and wondered what to do next. Then Rosanna had a fine idea.

She seated herself next the shy little Myron and suggested that everybody should tell a story. Tommy and Myron looked rather wild. Rosanna saw the look, and said that she thought they ought to commence with Helen, because she looked as though she knew lots of stories.

Helen said she didn't know so very many, but she was willing to try.

"This is a really truly story about a little, little boy. He did not have any brothers or sisters, and he was very lonely and unhappy although he had nice clothes and plenty to eat. So he thought if he just had a little kitten or a dog to play with and live with he would be a good deal happier, and perhaps he would even get to be as happy as he could be. But his mother did not like to have dogs or cats around because they tracked up things, so she wouldn't let him have them. And somebody wanted to give him a canary but his mother thought it would be a lot of trouble to feed. And once he 'most got a pair of white rats with his Fourth of July money, but they simply wouldn't let him. So there he was; and he grew lonelier and lonelier and he used to sit on the top step and stare down the street and wish he might whistle at the dogs he saw, but he wouldn't for fear one of them might be looking for a home and then it would be so disappointed after he had patted it and been kind to it, if it had to go on again.

"Well, one day there was a picnic down the river.

The people went by boat and then landed at the picnic grove, and spent the afternoon. The little boy, whose name was Peter, went with his mother and aunt, and when they got to the grove his mother said to his aunt, 'I don't see any reason why Peter shouldn't walk around and amuse himself and play with some of those children.' And his aunt said, 'Yes, if he doesn't fall into the river,' and his mother said, 'Peter, you see to it that you don't go near the bank.'

"Peter said 'yes, ma'am,' and really meant to mind. He walked off and pretty soon — oh, yes, I forgot to say that his mother gave him ten cents to spend for popcorn or on the merry-go-round. So pretty soon Peter saw a dog walking around with his tail sort of down as though he didn't know anybody and was not having a very nice time. Peter didn't call him, but he wished he knew the dog, he was such a pretty collie with beautiful long hair and such a nice face. Pretty soon the dog saw Peter, and quick as a wink he knew that Peter was lonely too, so he came up to him. They got to be friends in a minute and went walking off together, and Peter spent his ten cents for popcorn and shared it with the dog.

"So they went around liking each other more and more, and when it came time for supper the dog lay right under Peter's chair, and Peter's mother said, 'Well, if you haven't picked up a dog! I declare that child beats all!'

"After supper Peter and the dog walked around some more, and Peter knew that soon the boat would start and he would have to leave the dog and he felt worse and worse about it until he almost couldn't bear it at all.

"And he was thinking so hard that he forgot what his mother had told him, and walked along the top of the bank by the river. It was a high bank and crumbly; and all of a sudden a piece broke off and Peter slipped and slid down, down into the river, and under he went. The next thing he knew he was on the bank, and his mother was crying, and there was a lot of people, and the dog was there wet as sop, and he was trying to lick Peter's face, and Peter's mother was letting him do it. And a man said, 'Madame, if it hadn't been for that dog, your son would have been drowned. I saw it all.'

"Then Peter's mother kissed him, and patted the dog, and she said, 'Peter, if that dog has no home we will take him for your dog, and if he has, we will try to buy him.' But it turned out that the dog did not belong to anyone, and so Peter took him home, and had him for his dog always."

"Why, that's a perfectly beautiful story!" exclaimed Rosanna, and all the children thought so too.

"You ought to see *my* dog," said Tommy. "He's a fighter, he is!"

"How can you say that?" said Mary. "He is only three months old and can scarcely walk straight."

"Well, I bet he will fight when he gets bigger."

"He's not your dog anyhow," said Myron. "He's Gwenny's."

"Yes, and Myron bought him for her at the Pet Shop with money he earned himself. It is a toy poodle, so he won't ever be big."

"Now who tells the next story?" asked Rosanna. "I think it is Tommy's turn."

"Don't know none," said Tommy.

"Don't know *any*," his sister corrected him. "Go on and try, Tommy."

Tommy breathed hard, then said rapidly:

"Well, once over on the parkway two kids was playin', and a man came along drivin' a race horse, and it had got scared at a nautomobile, and was runnin' away, and the rein had broke, and the man he yelled, 'I'll give anybuddy a million dollars to stop this horse,' and one of the kids 'bout my size give a leap and grabbed the horse by the nose and stopped him. And the man jumped right out and give the kid a million dollars."

"The saints forgive him!" said Minnie. She did not say who.

"Mercy me!" said Rosanna.

"What did he do with the money?" asked Helen.

"Spent it," said Tommy promptly. "Went right down town and spent it."

"What could he spend such a lot for?" asked Helen.

"Spent it for candy and ice-cream cones and sody and cake, and he went to the circus and all the side shows, and Fontaine Ferry and bought a nautomobile and sling shot and everything."

"My sister Louisa Cordelia ought to know you," said Minnie.

"Don't want to know any girls," said Tommy rudely.

Rosanna felt that it was time to change the conversation. "Now who next?" she asked pleasantly. "What story can Luella tell?"

"I don't believe she can tell any story," said Mary, "but she knows some little verses she learned in school. They have such a sweet young lady for a teacher; mamma says she never saw anybody take such pains with the children as she does." She turned to Luella who was wriggling in embarrassment and biting her finger. "Speak something Miss Marie taught you, Luella honey."

"Miss Marie?" said Minnie. "Miss Marie? What is her other name?"

"Corrigan," said Mary.

"Well, then, that's my younger sister," said Minnie proudly. "She's a teacher, and I *will* say she is a good one. Nothing would do but she must go through normal school and teach. Seems like

she was just made for it, so patient and loving." She cast a glance at Tommy. "Not much like my sister Louisa Cordelia, she isn't."

"The children just love her to death," said Mary. "Go on, honey, and say the little piece about the little bird."

Luella arose, breathed hard, curtseyed, and very sweetly recited,

A little bird sat on a tree,
  And waved his little wing at me.
He said, "This seems a pleasant day,
  I think perhaps I'll fly away."
He bent his pretty little head,
  "I don't see any worms," he said.
He shook his pretty feathers out.
  "It's growing cold without a doubt.
When all the leaves have fallen down
  And all the trees are bare and brown,
When snow is deep on dell and hill,
  And wintry winds are cold and chill,
This would not be the place for me,"
  He said, and teetered on his tree.
"I know a land far, far away,
  Where winter is as warm as May."
He waved a wing and winked an eye,
  And off he flew, "Good-bye, good-bye!"

CHAPTER VIII

ALL the children except Tommy clapped their hands when Luella finished. It did indeed sound sweet and she spoke it very prettily, waving her hand and winking her own eye at the end.

Rosanna and Myron felt that their time had come. They looked at each other, but Minnie settled the question.

"Now it is Miss Rosanna's turn," she said, "and then Myron's. Ladies first. Give us a real nice story, Miss Rosanna."

"About robbers," said Tommy, chewing on a grass stem.

"I don't know any about robbers," said Rosanna pleasantly, "but I do know one about a cat, or a kitten rather, and it really happened. Helen told one about a dog, and this is about a cat.

"Once there were two little boys, Walter and Harold, and they were going a long, long way to their new home in the West where they were going to live. And they had a pet kitten that they wanted to take along so badly that fin'ly their mother and father said they might take it if they would carry it in its basket all the way and never ask anyone else to take care of it. So they said they would, and by-and-by they had everything

packed up and ready, and when the time came, they started off and got on the train, kitten and all.

"They had things for it to eat and milk for it to drink, and when the conductor was not in the car they used to take it out of its basket and pet it and play with it. And the kitten didn't mind it a bit.

"Well, when they had been on the train a couple of days they let the kitten out, and Harold had it on his lap sound asleep.

"But just when they were at a station and the train was standing still, something awfully exciting happened outside the window, and both boys forgot the kitten. She jumped down from Harold's lap and went along under the seats toward the end of the car. She thought she was going to have a nice little walk, but just then the brakeman came into the car and there was a kitten under one of the seats. He thought of course it had hopped on the car there at the station, so he took it up and put the poor little thing off the train, and then that *very* minute the whistle blew and off they went.

"It was a vestibule train, and when Walter and Harold found out that their kitten was gone they hunted every inch of the car over, and then hunted through the next car, thinking that she might have gone across the vestibule and into the other car. But she was not there. Just then along came the brakeman again and when the boys asked him if he had seen a kitten, he said, "Why, sure! Was that *your* cat? I thought she had hopped on the

train back there at the last station, and I took her and put her off.'

"Well, the boys felt so badly they didn't know what to *do,* and the brakeman said they would not stop at any station for sixty miles. Walter said he was going back to see if he could find her, but the brakeman said she was most likely gone by this time or somebody had picked her up. He was awfully sorry about it.

"When they had gone the sixty miles the car stopped, but the boys didn't care to look out or anything. They just sat and thought about their little kittie, and Harold said, 'Seems as though I can hear her cry,' and Walter said, 'Don't say that again,' and then he looked funny, because he thought he could hear her himself!

"Harold said, 'I suppose she is dead, and that is her ghost.' Walter said, 'No, it's not; even kitten ghosts don't make a noise. There it is again.'

"And then they looked around very slowly, the way you do when you think something is going to happen and you don't know just what it will be, and there in the seat back of them was the brakeman and he was holding that kitten!

"When he opened the car door he found her squeezed up in a corner of the top step, where she had ridden all that long way. When the brakeman tossed her off she knew that the boys were on the train, so she climbed right back, but she didn't get

on quick enough to get into the vestibule before the door was shut, so she had to hang on and ride outside. She was scared nearly to death and jumped at every sound and trembled for days, but the boys petted her and comforted her, and by-and-by she felt all right. And there were lots of mice in the house they went to live in, and that took her mind off herself. And that's all of that," said Rosanna, smiling.

"That's a nice story," said Minnie. "Now let's hear what Myron has to tell."

Myron shook his head. "Oh, go on, Myron," said Helen. "Tell us a story, please, even if it *is* short!"

"Once there was a little boy," said Myron, without waiting to be teased. "Once there was a little boy and he had a mamma and two brothers and three sisters, and he grew up and made lots of money, and bought lots of nice things for his mamma, and his two brothers and his three sisters and that's all."

"The dear lamb!" said Minnie. "That's the best story of the lot."

"Mine was better," said Tommy. "Mine was a real feller."

"Oh," murmured Minnie, "Louisa Cordelia has just *got* to get hold of you, young man!"

"I suppose it is my turn now," said Mary, "as long as you want to save Minnie for the last. Could you let me say you a little poetry, or was

Luella's enough? I think some poetry sort of mixes things up a little."

"I think poetry is *lovely*," said Rosanna sweetly. "We loved Luella's verses."

"Well, then I will say some instead of a story." Mary cleared her throat and, rising, made a little bow.

UNAFRAID

The day I die, I'll quickly go
  Past all the angels, row on row,
Straight up to God; I'll know His face
  Even up there in that new place.

In Sunday School, the way they teach,
  God is almost too great to reach.
They act a little bit afraid;
  Because the world and all He made.

But if He made the heavens blue,
  He made the sweet wild violets too;
And Oh, what careful work it took
  To plan the small trout in the brook.

I know He's just the very size
  Of father; with most loving eyes.
Just big enough so one like me
  Can safely lean against His knee.

"Those were lovely verses," said Minnie when Mary had finished. "I wonder who wrote them."

"My teacher wrote them," said Mary. "I think they are real nice."

"I do think it is a waste of time for me to tell a

story," said Minnie. "First you know the machine will be here and then we will have to hurry home."

"I would like to hear you tell a story ever so much," said Mary. "I know it would be a nice one, but I must be starting along pretty soon. It is a long way from here to the car track, and I have to stop so often on account of the baby being so heavy. It is so funny about babies, they seem to get so heavy toward night."

"Indeed they do after you have lugged them about all day," said Minnie. "I say I know all about it, dearie."

"We are not going to let you walk at all," said Rosanna. "We are going to take you wherever you live right in the car."

"Nautomobile ride! Nautomobile ride!" chanted Tommy, tossing his cap.

"I think you are just too good," said Mary. "Will your automobile hold such a lot?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, and more too!" said Rosanna, glad for once that she had a big Pierce-Arrow.

CHAPTER IX

"I HEAR the car coming," said Minnie. Everybody listened, and sure enough the big car rounded the bend and drew up at the bank with a mighty blast of the horn. Tommy yelled in reply and bolted for it, the others following, loaded down with the empty hamper and rugs, and by no means least, the baby, awake now and very happy after his sleep.

Minnie marshalled them into their places, putting the two boys on the front seat with Mr. Culver, and off they rolled. When they reached the little house where the children lived, Mary thanked Rosanna and Helen and Minnie and Mr. Culver again and she would have liked to thank the car too, and the hamper. Even Tommy managed to say, "Much obliged!" before he rushed to the house so he could have the fun of telling all about it before Mary could get there.

But Mary did not mind. This was something that would have to be told over and over a dozen or twenty times. She stood with Luella and Myron, the baby looped over her arm, and watched the car disappear with a feeling of happiness and gratitude that filled her thin little frame to overflowing.

When the car reached the great white steps of

Rosanna's house, the two little girls said good-night.

"I never had such a nice, lovely, beautiful day in all my life, Rosanna," she said. "And all because you were so good and kind."

"You would have thought of it just the same," said Rosanna, blushing. "But oh, Helen and Minnie, *wasn't* it lucky that we took such a lot of lunch?"

"Well, it did turn out so," said Minnie.

The car rolled away, and Rosanna and Minnie went into the big, cool hall.

On the table was a letter addressed to Rosanna in her grandmother's stiff, precise handwriting. Rosanna took it up with a sort of groan.

"That's to tell when she is coming home, of course," she said. "I won't read it until I am all undressed. Everything is going so beautifully and I am learning such a lot and having such a lovely time that it doesn't seem as though I could bear to have it come to an end."

"I think you ought to read your letter, Rosanna," Minnie said. "I don't believe in leaving things. You expect bad news in that letter and you are having a horrid time all the time you are getting ready for bed. You couldn't feel any worse if you opened it. And suppose there was good news in it? Then you would wish you had found it out before, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose so," said Rosanna listlessly.

She sighed and, taking the letter, tore off the end of the envelope and commenced to read. The second sentence caused her to cry out. She turned to Minnie, hugged her, and cried, "Oh, Minnie, you are so wise! Just listen to this!" The letter read:

"My dear Granddaughter Rosanna:

"What news I have had from home leads me to believe that you are well and being nicely cared for.

"Since this is the case, I feel that it will be possible for me to remain here in the East for a few weeks with your Uncle Robert. He is not ill, you understand, but is run down and nervous from the effects of his wound and many trying experiences abroad. He is fussing because he has lost track of a soldier friend of his, the man who saved his life. He is doing all he can to trace him, as he feels — and of course so do I — that we could never do enough to repay the debt we owe him.

"About yourself, I hope you will have a good time. Do not forget to practice. Mrs. Hargrave spoke of seeing a very interesting child at our house. I am very glad you have found among your acquaintances one whom you would like to make your friend. I can trust you, Rosanna, to choose wisely. And I am glad to see that Mrs. Hargrave says that this Helen somebody comes of an old Lee County family. I cannot read the name. Mrs. Hargrave is a very careless penman.

Always write distinctly, Rosanna. It is one of the many marks of good breeding.

"Your Uncle Robert sends his love. He is anxious to see you.

"Your loving grandmother,

"VIRGINIA LEE HORTON."

Rosanna read the letter twice.

Then she turned and looked at Minnie. "It's good and bad too, isn't it, Minnie? You know Helen is *not* one of the Culvers of Lee County, but she is just as good and sweet as though she belonged to all the Lee County Culvers in the world. Minnie, what shall I do?"

"You must do what you think right, dearie," said Minnie, her kind, wise eyes searching the girl's face. "I can't tell you what to do. You must decide for yourself. It's one of the biggest things in the world to learn; that is, to decide what is right and wrong without someone telling us."

She kissed Rosanna good-night and left the room. A moment later she returned. "Mrs. Hargrave just telephoned, dearie, that she wants you and Helen to take luncheon with her to-morrow." Once more she bade the little girl good-night, and Rosanna, tired out, fell asleep before the door was closed.

She did not see Helen the next day until time for luncheon, but when she waked up she found a book lying beside her bed. Helen had sent it over to

her. It was all about the Girl Scouts, and their rules and duties and pleasures, and Rosanna found it hard work not to sit down and read instead of taking her cold bath and dressing herself. Then after breakfast came the history lesson and the music and dressing again, and when Helen, very crisp and dainty, came in ready to go to Mrs. Hargrave's, she found that Rosanna had not had time to read a single line.

Mrs. Hargrave lived three houses away, and the children felt very important and fine, especially Helen, who had never been asked to luncheon with a grown-up lady before. Her eyes grew round when they entered the house. It was so dim and cool and "old timey" as Helen put it.

Mrs. Hargrave always dressed in the latest fashion for old ladies, yet somehow she always looked as though she belonged to another day and time. When she drove about the city she scorned the modern automobile. She went in the spickest and spannest little carriage drawn by an old, sleek and still frisky roan horse with a gold mounted harness and her driver was a colored man as haughty and aristocratic looking as Mrs. Hargrave herself; perhaps a little more so.

She advanced to meet the two little girls with a charming manner that made them curtsey their very prettiest and caused them to feel more important and grown up than ever.

During luncheon Mrs. Hargrave said:

"Will your brother return to college now that the war is over, Helen?"

Helen looked up in surprise. "I think you have me mixed up with some other little girl, Mrs. Hargrave," she said. "I have no brother."

Mrs. Hargrave stared at her guest. "Are you not Lucius Culver's youngest child?" she questioned. "The Lee County Culvers?"

"No, Mrs. Hargrave," said Helen. "I am John Culver's daughter."

"Another family," said Mrs. Hargrave and changed the subject politely by asking Rosanna what she had heard from her grandmother.

Helen sat thinking. She was a straightforward, honest little girl, and somehow she felt as though she was sailing under false colors as far as Mrs. Hargrave went. She felt sure of Rosanna; Rosanna did not care whether she was poor or rich, and it made no difference at all to her that Helen's father worked for Mrs. Horton. But some people were different, Helen reflected. Twice Mrs. Hargrave had spoken of Helen being one of the Culvers of Lee County, and Helen wondered if it would make any difference to the fine old lady sitting there in her soft, shimmery silks, with the long string of real pearls about her neck if she thought the little girl sitting there as her guest was living over a garage back of Mrs. Horton's elegant home. It puzzled Helen and troubled her. But try as she might, not once did the talk turn so she could bring

in what she felt she wanted Mrs. Hargrave to know. It just *wouldn't* come about.

After luncheon was over Mrs. Hargrave took the children and showed them some of the strange and curious things about the house.

Then she had a delightful suggestion to make. She herself was obliged to go down town to see her lawyer and she thought it would be very nice for the girls to come for a little ride. To Rosanna, used only to automobiles, and Helen who rode most of the time in street cars, the idea of riding along after the proud gold-harnessed, frisky old horse in the spick-and-span carriage was a treat and an adventure. Making themselves politely small and quiet, sitting on either side of Mrs. Hargrave, they went trotting down Third Street, turned by the big white library building, and continued down Fourth Street where they eyed the crowds, read the giddy signs in front of the movie houses and looked at the window displays.

While Mrs. Hargrave talked to her lawyer, the girls sat in the carriage and pretended that they were grown-up ladies.

When Mrs. Hargrave came out, they started up Fourth Street.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Hargrave, "this is the first time in all my life that any little girls have visited me without their mothers? And I have had the *nicest* time I think I ever had. I want to

remember it always." She gave the signal to stop, and asked the children to get out.

"There is something I want to get here," she said, and led the way into a big jeweler's shop. The two girls stopped to look at the rings in the case near the door, but Mrs. Hargrave called them. "I need a notebook and pencil and I thought you would like to help me select it. I am a rather fussy and very forgetful old lady."

She did seem fussy over that notebook, but finally chose a dainty gold one with a square in the center for initials. Attached by a tiny gold chain was a slender pencil with a blue stone in the top.

Then, to their amazement, the clerk laid two others exactly like it on the counter. Three just alike!

"I think it would be nice for us all to remember our pleasant day, don't you?" asked Mrs. Hargrave, smiling. "I want to give you each one just like this one that I am getting for myself. Then we will think of each other whenever we use them."

Helen lifted Mrs. Hargrave's delicate old hand and laid it against her cheek.

"Oh, Mrs. Hargrave," she cried, "I will *never* forget you. I don't need the notebook, but it is too lovely, and I will keep it as long as I live."

Mrs. Hargrave's eyes filled with tears. "Bless your heart!" she said.

CHAPTER X

THE very next day Mrs. Hargrave was called into the country to see a sick cousin. She telephoned Minnie before she left and told her that she felt that things were going along as well as anyone could possibly expect, and that she was delighted with Rosanna and her little friend. This message distressed Minnie for she was just about to go to see Mrs. Hargrave.

Minnie was not happy. Silly and foolish as it was, she well knew that the proud old Mrs. Horton would not be willing to accept as poor and simple a child as Helen for Rosanna's closest friend, no matter how sweet and well mannered she might be. Minnie, who knew real worth when she saw it, despised Mrs. Horton for her overbearing ideas, but what to do she didn't know. She feared a storm if she let things go until Mrs. Horton's return, yet she dreaded a separation for the children, when they might enjoy each other for two or three weeks longer.

Rosanna was improving daily. Minnie was pleased and proud to see how she continued to do for herself and learn in every way to be independent. Her sewing was wonderful. She was

working eagerly on a little dark blue dress like Helen's for herself, and with Minnie's help was even putting a little simple cross-stitching on the cuffs and yoke. Rosanna was prouder of that dress than of anything she had ever had in her beautiful, crowded wardrobe.

Minnie felt that she wanted to consult with someone, and the most sensible person she knew was Mrs. Hargrave. But with Mrs. Hargrave away, all Minnie could see to do was to let things go along, and "trust to luck" as she put it. Minnie didn't like "trusting to luck" at all; and every time she saw the two children playing together so happily and busily she shook her head and sighed.

Rosanna, too, in a dim way was feeling troubled, because she too knew her grandmother, and remembered other times when she had been severely scolded for trying to make friends with children whose parents did not measure up to the standard set by Mrs. Horton.

In fact, for all the seeming happiness, no one was wholly happy but Helen!

Helen had been taught by her wise young mother that the most important things in life are not to be measured as anything that money can buy. According to Mrs. Culver, a little girl must be obedient and truthful and well behaved and kind. She must have a low and pleasant voice and be able to sit in the presence of her elders without trying to

enter the conversation unless asked to do so. These things she had taught Helen, and her little girl had been a ready pupil. Mrs. Culver was justly proud of her.

Rosanna was just a bit afraid. And the fear caused her to go in a line that was not *perfectly* straightforward. She was sorry enough for it afterward — sorrier than she thought she could ever be. But that did not mend things in the least.

Because she did not know just how to turn around and explain everything to her grandmother and still be sure of her happy time, to say nothing of protecting her dear Helen from distress, when she answered her grandmother's letter she wrote as follows:

Dear Grandmother:

"I was glad to get your letter, and I am glad Uncle Robert is home again. Give my love to him, please. I am glad you are having a good time, and I hope you will stay away as long as you like. I am having a very good time. Oh, grandmother, I am having a lovely time. What do you think? Mrs. Hargrave had Helen and me to luncheon with her, and she likes Helen as much as I do, only she doesn't belong to the Lee family, and after luncheon Mrs. Hargrave took us down town with her, and before we came home she bought each of us a gold notebook with a gold pencil on a gold chain fastened

to it. She bought herself one too so we each have one just like a secret society.

"I am learning to cook and to sew. I am making myself a dress. It is very pretty. I shall make a good many of my dresses after this. It saves a good deal of money, Minnie says, and I can help the poor with it.

"We went out to Jacobs Park for a picnic, and five poor little children had lost their basket of supper. So I thought what you would do if you saw five little children who had lost their supper, and I asked them to have supper with us. There was enough, on account of our taking Uncle Robert's hamper, and Uncle Robert always liking to be generous.

"We have planned a great many things. If they don't all get done before you come home, grandmother, perhaps you will enjoy doing them too.

"I am learning a great deal about the Girl Scouts. I want to be one.

"Did you know our cook has a little lame boy at home? I was glad to find it out. It is one more person to be kind to. I have sent him all my set of puzzle pictures.

"Minnie is planning to get married. She has a trunk of things. When you come home won't it be nice because we can go down town and buy something for her. She will like something you have given her.

"She likes you very much, I am sure, because she always says, 'Well, all I can say is there's not many like your grandmother in this world.'

"I think it is so nice to be liked. I want to grow up to be liked. I think being a Girl Scout will help. Helen says all sorts of girls belong, rich as well as poor, and that it broadens you.

"This is a long letter, grandmother, but I had a good deal to tell you. So please have a good time, grandmother, and I am your loving little girl

"ROSANNA."

Minnie sent a letter too. It read:

"Mrs. Horton:

"I wish to report that everything seems to be going smoothly. Mrs. Hargrave has taken a great liking to Miss Rosanna, and her new friend Miss Helen, and likes to have them with her. Miss Rosanna practices and studies faithfully, and her music teacher says she never had such a bright pupil. I have her take a rest in the middle of each day. The day you left she broke her bottle of tonic, and I could not get more, as you have the prescription. But I do not think she needs it. She has gained two pounds since you left us. I give her hair a hundred strokes each night. I think she wants to bob her hair, it is so very long and heavy, but I tell her not for worlds, as you are so proud of it.

"We are keeping to the routine you ordered ex-

cept when Mrs. Hargrave has made some slight change, but of course I know that is all right, as you told me she might wish to do so.

"Respectfully,

"MINNIE."

And Mrs. Hargrave wrote from the country a letter full of praise for both little girls and for Minnie.

Mrs. Horton received all three letters the same day. She slipped them away in her portfolio, thinking as she did so, with a smile, of Cousin Hendy's trunks full of letters.

One thing troubled her a little. It seemed as though she could see in all the letters evidences that little Rosanna was undergoing some slight changes in her way of thinking and acting. And Mrs. Horton did not care to have Rosanna change in the least. She was perfectly satisfied the way she was. It had not occurred to Mrs. Horton to wonder if poor little motherless Rosanna was satisfied with her pampered, lonely life.

Mrs. Horton had Rosanna's life all mapped out. However, she remembered the high stone wall and reflected that the child could see very little of the outside world if she was kept behind that.

CHAPTER XI

How the time did fly! The days were not long enough for all the two girls crowded into them.

In a few weeks Helen would be going away to a Scout camp where dozens of girls would live in tents and row and swim and fish and cook and listen to wise and sympathetic talks from their leaders. Helen knew all about it from past trips, and she spent hours while they sat working on their presents for Mrs. Hargrave, whose birthday was rapidly approaching, telling Rosanna all about their good times. Rosanna felt that she never could bear it if she couldn't be a Girl Scout. Helen, not knowing Mrs. Horton, did not see how any grown person could refuse such a request and she told Rosanna so.

They had made a great many plans for Mrs. Hargrave's birthday. She was coming to take dinner with them.

Mrs. Hargrave never looked more beautiful nor more imposing than when she arrived. The two girls were overcome with pride as they saw their guest descend from her little carriage and, laying her hand on the arm of the old colored man who attended her, walk slowly up the steps.

When dinner was served, it was perfectly splendid to hear Mrs. Hargrave exclaim over the flowers and the favors and everything.

During the meal the children told Mrs. Hargrave what they hoped to be.

Rosanna wanted to be an artist. Helen said she intended to grow up and marry and be the mother of a family.

"Bless my soul!" said Mrs. Hargrave, staring at her. "What put that in your head?"

"Something mother learned in college," said Helen simply. "She believes it, and of course so do I. There was a teacher in college who was very wise, mother says, and he warned them and warned them against what he called popular complaints. He said they must always be careful before they joined anything and promised to uphold it to understand *exactly* what it was and how far it would lead them. He said it didn't matter whether they were thinking of going into a nunnery or joining the Salvation Army or the Suffragets or what else, they wanted to ask themselves could they lift themselves and help humanity by doing that thing. And he said in this day and age when there were so many dissatisfied people everywhere, he thought the most important thing in the world was to teach everyone, and especially children, the love of country."

"Wise man," said Mrs. Hargrave, nodding. "What else?"

"He told them that love of country was not boasting about where you came from, and telling everybody how high the corn grows in New York, or how blue the grass is in Kentucky or things about places like that. He says that is nothing but bragging. But he said what people needed was to love all their country, east and west and south and north, to try to understand one another and to pull together for the United States.

"And he said that if every one of those girls who married and had children would teach them this as hard as ever they could, some day the states would really be united, and wiser laws would be made, and all the young Americans would love their country and be willing to live for her. He said it is harder to live faithfully for anything than to die for it because it takes so much longer."

"Bless my soul!" said Mrs. Hargrave again. "Go on!"

"That's all," said Helen. "I don't see what else I can do except teach some children of my own about it, do you, Mrs. Hargrave?"

"I think that would be the finest thing you could do," said the childless old lady. "Quite the finest! Are you going to college?"

"I want to," said Helen, "if we can afford it. We are saving up for it all the time."

"How do you save?" asked Mrs. Hargrave. She was certainly a curious old lady.

"Well," said Helen, "I wear my hair docked,

and that saves a lot in hair ribbons, only this fall mother says I must let it grow. When mother takes me to buy a coat, we look at *two* good ones that will last two winters, but perhaps one has pretty braid or something on it, that makes it cost more. Then if one of us looks as though we wanted it the other one whispers, 'Rah rah rah, college ah,' which is our own college yell, and we take the *plain* one.

"Lots of ways it looks to be harder on mother than it is on me. I know she goes without so many things she would love — lectures and concerts and all that. I just *hate* that part!"

"I am glad you do," said Mrs. Hargrave.

"Helen and I are hoping that we can go to college together," said Rosanna.

"Rosanna is so dear," said Helen. "She wants to help me save, but of course that won't do."

"I don't see why not," said Rosanna. They had talked this over many times. "Do you see, Mrs. Hargrave? I never spend my allowance."

"No," said Mrs. Hargrave, "it wouldn't do at all. In the first place Helen is earning her education in a lovely way, and your allowance is given you. It is no effort for you to get it, so it does not benefit you, my little dear. Helen must go on herself. Her help could only come from a fairy godmother."

"There are no fairy godmothers," said Rosanna bitterly.

"I was beginning to think there might be," said Mrs. Hargrave.

"No," said Rosanna. "If there was a fairy godmother, just one in all the world, she would come and make my grandmother let me go out of the garden and know lots of little girls and go to school and be a Girl Scout."

Mrs. Hargrave sat thinking as she tasted her ice. Then she asked, "What are these Girl Scouts?"

"I have all the books," said Helen eagerly. "May I bring them around to show you? Then you can see just why Rosanna wants to be one. I am sure Rosanna could not be hurt by knowing a lot of little girls and learning all the things that are required of the Girl Scouts."

"Why should she be hurt?" said Mrs. Hargrave.

"Why, grandmother thinks I should not go out of my class."

"Class is all right," said Mrs. Hargrave. "It is very necessary, but what you want to look for, Rosanna, is *worth*. Suppose Helen here was not in your own class. Suppose her father was a laboring man of some sort, and she lived away from this part of town, that wouldn't change Helen."

Helen looked up in amazement. "But my father is —"

Mrs. Hargrave interrupted. "I will tell you what I will do, Rosanna, I will talk to your grandmother myself if she makes any objections to your going to school and all the rest." She rose as she

spoke, and they wandered out to the rose garden where coffee was served for Mrs. Hargrave and where the children offered their gifts.

When she went home at last, she put an arm around each child. "This is the happiest birthday I have had. Good-night, and thank you! I will help you all I can, Rosanna, and I feel very sure, Helen, that your savings or the fairy godmother will take you to college with Rosanna. Two little girls as nice and sweet and well-bred as you ought to be friends all your lives."

She kissed them both and, carrying her presents, went down the steps leaning on the arm of her servant.

"I feel full of a happy sadness," Rosanna sighed. "I don't see why, do you?"

"No," said Helen, "only that she is so perfectly lovely. She is just as though there was two parts to her. The outside pretty, but old and wrinkled and kind of high and grand, while there is somebody just too sweet, and real young and dancy and loving on the inside. And the inside one can never grow old at all, but will go right on understanding how you feel, and when the outside gets too old to last any longer, why, she will just go and be a young, young angel."

"I guess that's it," said Rosanna. "But what a fuss there is about class and position and where you were born, isn't there?"

"Yes," said Helen. "When she was talking

about workingmen I tried to tell her about my father working for your grandmother."

"Yes, she interrupted you," said Rosanna. "I don't see as it makes any difference what he does. No matter what *any*body thinks, Helen, we are going to be friends? You promised me that."

"Of course," said Helen.

"Well, it was a nice party, wasn't it, Helen? I think Mrs. Hargrave did truly have a good time."

When Helen went home that night she was very quiet. Her mother thought she was tired, but Helen was thinking. She loved Mrs. Hargrave dearly, and she wanted her to know some things that she evidently was all mixed up about.

The following morning she did not go over to see Rosanna. Instead she dressed with even greater care than usual and went slowly around to Mrs. Hargrave's, where she found her in a bright little morning room, sitting before a large desk.

"I wanted to tell you something," said Helen, "and I am going to get it all mixed up. I sort of have the feeling that *everything* is mixed up and that I am doing something that is not quite right. So I came over to you. I didn't even tell mother because I was afraid it would worry her. You see *she* doesn't understand either."

"Dear me, how mysterious!" said Mrs. Hargrave.

"It is like this," said Helen, plunging into the middle. "You have been so good to me that I

want to tell you that I am not one of the Culvers of Lee County or any other county. I am just the plainest sort of a little girl. I have the nicest father and mother in the whole world, but they are poor, and my father does work. He works for Mrs. Horton; he is her chauffeur, and we live in the apartment over the garage.

"What will she say, Mrs. Hargrave, when she knows what a plain little girl I am? I thought I would come and tell you about it. I don't see what difference being poor makes if one tries to be nice inside, do you?"

"No," cried Mrs. Hargrave. "It makes no difference at all. Don't let anyone make you think that. And your coming to tell me this shows me just what sort of a child you are," and she kissed Helen.

"Now, let's get this thing all straight as far as you understand it, my dear, and then I will tell you what I think about it."

So for a long time they sat together, Helen's hand in Mrs. Hargrave's while Helen told all about herself and her friendship with Rosanna, and Mrs. Hargrave chuckled when she thought of her letters to Mrs. Horton and how she had innocently misled her.

CHAPTER XII

ROSANNA had just finished her luncheon that very same day, when she heard Minnie talking to someone over the telephone. Minnie, seeing Rosanna behind her, merely said yes and no and hung up as soon as she could.

"What are you planning to do, Miss Rosanna?" she asked.

"This afternoon?" said Rosanna. "Well, Helen is coming over with her mother and we are going to sit on the porch of the playhouse and sew. Helen and I are going to make a couple of rompers for Baby Christopher. Helen and her mother went over to see Gwenny the other day, and Mrs. Culver says that baby actually has nothing to put on. And there is no money to buy anything with because Gwenny has had to have a new brace that cost thirty dollars. Oh, Minnie, will I be rich when I grow up?"

"Yes, you will," said Minnie.

"How much; millions?" wistfully.

"A good lot anyhow," said Minnie.

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Rosanna. "I am going to make so many people happy with it. There is such a lot of things you can do with money, Min-

nie, to help people. I was so sorry when I heard about that brace. I am going to save more of my allowance after this and keep listening so I will hear when somebody wants something like that. Only there are some things that you can't buy with money. I couldn't buy Helen, could I? And I couldn't buy Mrs. Hargrave."

Minnie started.

"No, dearie, you couldn't," she said. "And I have got to trot along now because I have to go out this afternoon, and if Mrs. Culver and Helen are coming over, I know you will be all right."

Rosanna found her little workbasket and, taking a book to read until her guests came, went over to the playhouse and commenced rocking in one of the little wicker chairs.

Minnie dressed carefully but plainly and went out. Rosanna would have been much surprised if she had seen her hurry down the street and turn into Mrs. Hargrave's big house.

Mrs. Hargrave was waiting for her and after a kindly greeting she said: "Minnie, I want you to tell me all about this Culver family, and how Rosanna found Helen, and how they happen to be such good friends, and how it is that you allowed it when you know just how Mrs. Horton feels about family and all that."

Minnie did not flinch.

"I have been wanting to come and tell you all about it," she said, "but I thought that you would

find out things from the children. Mrs. Horton just won't let Rosanna know *any* children at all. But I don't feel like saying all I would like to say, seeing how I work for Mrs. Horton."

"You would free your mind, I reckon, if you were at your own home, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, ma'am, I would!" said Minnie.

"Well, then," said Mrs. Hargrave, "suppose you and I talk as though we were just a couple of human beings who want to do a kind turn for two little girls. That Helen child was over here this morning, to tell me that she was afraid I thought she belonged to some fine family like the Culvers of Lee County. Lee County indeed! Those Culvers are scalawags, every man of them! She is lucky she doesn't own one of them for a father.

"And the honest little angel was afraid I would be disappointed when I found out who she really is. Well, Minnie, I was never so pleased with a child in my life! I am going to do something for her some day.

"Now I want to hear from you just how this friendship started. It seems a letter that I wrote to Mrs. Horton put the seal on it and I want to know where we all stand."

"Whatever we do there is going to be an awful fuss," said Minnie, sighing. She sat on the edge of the chair facing Mrs. Hargrave and told that lady more of Rosanna's lonely, friendless little life than Mrs. Hargrave had ever guessed. She told her of

the difference in Rosanna since Helen had come, and her fears for the child if Mrs. Horton should come back and forbid their friendship.

"I shall just leave!" concluded Minnie.

"Don't be an idiot!" said Mrs. Hargrave, frowning. "That would be a nice thing to do with Rosanna heartbroken. Now, Minnie, all there is to this is that Mrs. Horton years and years ago had a younger sister who eloped with a no-account man whom she met when she visited his sister. They were really very common people, and Mrs. Horton's little sister died of a broken heart.

"When Mrs. Horton married, her children were boys, as you know, and she carried her bitterness in her heart until her son's little orphan girl came to live with her. She is making a great mistake with Rosanna and she must somehow be made to see it before it is too late. But that is the reason for her foolishness.

"She adored her little sister, and she adores Rosanna. I am sorry the affair is so mixed up, but you just leave it to me. In the meantime do just as you are doing and give the girls all the chance you can to have a good time. I will stand back of little Helen if I have to adopt her. I suppose her parents are healthy?"

Minnie giggled. "Yes, ma'am; healthy and real young."

"Well, well, there must be some other way then," said Mrs. Hargrave, smiling. "To start, I will

write Mrs. Horton a letter just before she returns, and I think a heart-to-heart talk will arrange things nicely."

In the meantime, Mrs. Culver had helped the girls cut out two sets of dark, comfortable rompers, and Rosanna had sewed them up on her little machine.

Mrs. Culver was also making a romper for Baby Christopher. Hers was a cunning one for Sunday, a little pink check with bands of plain pink, and buttons nearly as big as tea saucers sewed on wherever a button would go.

Mrs. Culver was a wise woman, and she knew that Baby Christopher, small as he was, would have a good effect on his many brothers and sisters if he could be made beautiful and dressy on the one day in the week when the busy family had time to enjoy his cunning ways. So Christopher was to have three rompers — good, new, beautiful rompers of his own.

While Mrs. Culver sat thinking the two girls talked about the opening of the Girl Scout troop in the school Helen was to enter in the fall.

CHAPTER XIII

One morning Mrs. Hargrave was called to the telephone to speak with Mrs. Culver. Mrs. Culver wanted to know if Mrs. Hargrave thought it would be all right to take the two girls to Fontaine Ferry for the afternoon, eat their supper there, and return when the children had had a chance to see the electrical display.

"It is the sort of a place one always wants to see once, like Coney Island," she said, "and I think the girls are about the right age to have a good time there for a few hours without being disillusioned."

Mrs. Hargrave agreed with her.

"It will be a wild adventure for Rosanna," she said. "I have faith in Helen keeping her head, but you must watch Rosanna. If she looks too feverish, bring her home, please."

"I will indeed," promised Mrs. Culver.

"Of course you will; I am not afraid," said Mrs. Hargrave. "Send the children around here before you start."

Once more Uncle Robert's hamper was dragged out and stocked with good things. They were to start at three o'clock. When they were ready they went skipping down the street to Mrs. Hargrave's house.

"Well, Rosanna," she said, "I wonder what your grandmother will say to me when she finds out that I have given you permission to go to Fontaine Ferry? I know you will have a splendid time. I have never been there myself, and I am sorry that I can't go today. I am obliged to take the six o'clock train for the country. Cousin Hendy has sent for me post haste. She says she is at the point of death. I suppose this time it is cucumbers. They are about ripe now.

"I want you both to remember everything you do, so you can tell me about it. If I stay in the country for a few days, Rosanna, I will write a letter to your grandmother telling her just what I think about a great many things, and urging her to let you join the Girl Scouts.

"And as long as I can't go and have a good time spending my money, I want you children to take it and spend it for me. This is not for your education, Helen. I want you to promise to spend it, every bit."

They kissed her good-by and calling their thanks went dancing away.

The car was waiting, and off they went on the pleasant ride through the city and out Broadway. As there was plenty of time, they drove through Shawnee Park and along the bluff overlooking the Ohio River creeping sluggishly past. Then they turned, and went a short mile to the entrance to the Ferry.

Parking the car, they went in, Mr. Culver bringing the hamper of supper. The Ferry is a very large place and every foot of it is covered with tan-bark, smooth and brown and springy. Rosanna felt as though she was walking in a riding academy. Everything was exquisitely clean.

As the children walked along, they commenced to hear music everywhere and to see the merry-go-rounds whirling, the Ferris wheel spinning high in the air, the squeals from the shute-the-shutes, and hundreds of other fascinating noises. They found a place where they could check the hamper and coats, and sat down on a bench for a little to look around.

Presently Helen's father said, "Well, we will have to start if we want to see everything. Shall we have a ride on the merry-go-round to start with?"

Rosanna drew out her envelope.

"We must spend our dollar," she said and tore it open. Helen did the same. Each envelope held a clean new ten dollar bill. The children looked at them in amazement.

"And I can't use it for college!" Helen wailed. "She made me promise to spend it."

When they reached the merry-go-round, they chose the wildest looking horses and mounted them in fear and trembling. When they had finished the wonderful five minutes, they tried the chariots.

Then there was a certain camel that looked safe and steady, and Helen rode a lion.

They wanted to ride all day, but Helen's father warned them that there were other things to see. They walked along looking everywhere at once when Rosanna gave a scream. She found herself looking into a mirror, clear and bright; but what had it done to Rosanna? She was really a thin little girl who had often had to take cod liver oil. In the mirror she gazed at a fat chunk with Rosanna's features and hair and about ten times Rosanna's breadth. It was quite terrifying. Then she heard an awed gasp from Helen followed by a shriek of laughter, and ran over to see what was left of Helen in a mirror that had drawn her out to the thickness of a needle. Together the girls looked and laughed.

After they had torn themselves away from this amusement, they came to a booth where dozens of rings like embroidery hoops could be thrown over pegs in the wall. Each peg had a prize hanging above it: gold watches, diamond rings, wrist watches, gold and silver bracelets, and dozens of other things. But most of the pegs had little bright tin tags or medals and you had to get ten of those before you could exchange them for a near-gold breast-pin.

Helen and Rosanna were very much excited over this, and could have been quite covered with medals. They would not throw the rings on any peg

that was worth while. Finally they moved on in disgust, after paying the man about a dollar apiece.

On a corner were a group of little burros, the tiny Mexican donkeys and children could ride along to the corner and back for ten cents. Nothing in the whole world could make those donkeys go off a slow walk. They knew perfectly well that it didn't pay to frisk up their heels and bolt, so they simply wagged an ear or flirted a tail if the children slapped them.

"I suppose they have traveled to that corner fifty million times," said Helen, watching the solemn procession take its way with the donkey boys following close on the donkeys' heels and shouting to them to "Giddap!"

"Poor dears!" said Rosanna. "How tired of it all they must be!"

It took a lot of argument before they decided to try the Ferris wheel, but Rosanna wisely said that it would probably be the last chance *she* would ever have to try it, and Helen said that she wouldn't want to come unless Rosanna could, so the children seated themselves and were strapped in the basket, and presently when all the little basket seats were full, off they went. It was perfectly frightful when you have just been a simple human being all your life and suddenly try sailing up and around all at the same time! At the top there was a drop, a sort of launching out right into space, and the girls clung to each other and shut their eyes.

After they had rested awhile they went along, threading their way through the crowds until they came to the roller coaster.

Here they sat in a little car which held four people, but Mrs. Culver still refused to leave the ground. They embarked from a little platform, and were in one car of a little train of four. On the other side of the platform four other cars were filling up. When all the seats were taken, someone gave a signal and off went the little trains down such a steep grade that their rush carried them far up another incline. This was repeated over and over until they had reached a great height. Here there was a sheer drop as straight as it could be made without taking the cars off the rails, and down they went, turning and twisting. All at once they were plunged into a pitch black tunnel.

"Oh, oh, *oh!*" cried Rosanna. It was the first time she had screamed, but she did not hear herself because everyone else was screaming too.

Then as suddenly as they had plunged into the dark, they came out into the light again, gave a few more turns and drops for good measure, and stopped at the very identical place where they started.

They got out of their car, and staggered, rather than walked, over to Mrs. Culver, who was laughing at them. Rosanna's long curls were blown every which way around her small, dark face, and Helen's bobbed hair was sticking straight up.

"There is a Trip to the Moon right over here," said Mr. Culver. "Don't you want to go?"

"No, thank you," said Rosanna feebly, and Helen said, "Why, daddy, I couldn't bear another thing today! Let's go back and ride those nice steady wooden horses."

They walked back to the merry-go-round, and spent a happy half hour riding the menagerie. After that it was time to get supper. It always takes a long time to eat a picnic supper, and dusk was close when at last they finished. One by one the stars came out and then as though touched by a great spring, Fontaine Ferry burst into a dazzling blaze of electric lights.

Blazing, twinkling, winking, the lights hung or turned or whirled. White, colored groups, and single stars, among the trees, down the wide driveways, the Ferry had turned into fairyland.

"This is the best of all," said Rosanna softly.

"Isn't it?" answered Helen, her eyes wide. "How I wish Mrs. Hargrave could see it! That *young* Mrs. Hargrave that is inside the old shell of a Mrs. Hargrave would have all sorts of pretty thoughts about it. Don't you know she would?"

"Tomorrow you must come over real early," said Rosanna as they rode home, squeezing Helen's hand. "And I owe grandmother a letter. It will be easy to make a nice letter out of all we have seen. I wish Mrs. Hargrave would come home tomorrow."

The car drove up before the big house, and Ros-

anna, tired out, but so very, very happy, thanked Mr. and Mrs. Culver and ran up the steps. The car waited, purring at the curb, to see that the door was promptly opened. Rosanna heard the lock shoot back and the knob turn.

"It's all right," she said, looking down at the car. With a wave and a smile Mr. Culver drove off, and happy little Rosanna turned slowly, speaking as she did so.

"Oh, Minnie dear, I have had the bestest sort of a time!" she said. "I only wish you —" She looked up. Her grandmother stood before her.

"Why, grandmother, when did you get home?" said Rosanna with a smile, lifting her face to be kissed.

Her grandmother did not bend down. Instead she stood very stiff and straight, looking at Rosanna with hard, cold, angry eyes that cut her like swords.

"Go to your room!" said Mrs. Horton in a dreadful voice.

CHAPTER XIV

ROSANNA turned pale, but she looked steadily into her grandmother's cold eyes.

"I have done nothing wrong, grandmother," she said. "I —"

"Go to your room!" repeated Mrs. Horton, pointing to the stairs. "I will attend to you later."

Rosanna slowly climbed the broad staircase, clinging to the handrail and dragging her feet like a very tired old woman instead of a dear little happy girl. She felt herself trembling. Over and over she thought of what she had just said to Helen of her grandmother: "I am sure she means to be kind." Yet here, without a word of explanation, she was ordered to her room without a single greeting, as though she had indeed done something *very* naughty. Reaching her room, she sat down on the side of her bed and tried to think it out. What had she done? Where was Minnie?

Minnie: where was she? *Minnie* could tell her what had come to pass to make her grandmother so angry. She walked unsteadily over to the table and pressed the electric button by which she always summoned Minnie when she needed her.

Almost at once the door opened: but it was not

Minnie. Mrs. Horton came in and closed the door.

"What do you want?" she asked harshly.

"I rang for Minnie," said Rosanna in a low voice.

"You can get to bed as best you can," said Mrs. Horton. "Minnie will not be allowed to see you. Minnie has been discharged. She is untrustworthy, and I would have sent her packing tonight, but she insisted on her right to stay under this roof until morning. So she is in her room where I have ordered her to remain."

"Can't I see her again ever, grandmother?" asked Rosanna, with trembling lips.

"Certainly not!" said Mrs. Horton. "You are a bad, ungrateful child. Get to bed as best you can! I cannot trust myself to talk to you tonight. Tomorrow I will tell you what I think of the way you have acted in my absence."

"I have not been naughty," said Rosanna. "I did just as you told me I could do. I saved your letter so I could show you if you said anything about it. Oh, grandmother, please, I have not been naughty! I have been so happy."

"*Happy!*" sneered Mrs. Horton. "*Happy!* There is a low streak in you. To think of the way you have been acting — I will see you tomorrow after I have seen Mrs. Hargrave, and when I can control myself."

She swept from the room without saying goodnight, and Rosanna remained seated on the bed, her head whirling, her mouth dry and quivering.

Rosanna did not try to undress. Warm as it was, she was chilled to the bone. What would happen to Helen? And of course Mr. Culver would have to go. An hour went by, and another. She heard her grandmother coming up the stairs. Quick as thought she pressed the button and the room was pitch dark. Her grandmother approached her door, opened it a crack and listened. Hearing nothing, seeing nothing, she closed it and went on to her own room.

Rosanna breathed freely again, and turned on the light. An overpowering desire to see Minnie swept over her. She *must* see Minnie, must comfort her and be comforted. She felt that she would go mad if she had to spend the night alone. She looked at the little gold clock on her table. It was eleven o'clock.

She slipped off her shoes, and noticed for the first time that she was still wearing her coat and hat. She tossed them aside, once more put out the light, and tiptoed toward the door. She was going to Minnie.

With the greatest care she turned the knob and opened the door a crack. She opened the door wide and stepped into the blackness of the hall.

Something soft and warm and human collided with her. Hands clutched her, and a well-known voice whispered, "Dearie!"

After the first moment of fright, Rosanna felt herself go limp. She clung fast.

"Oh, Minnie, Minnie!" she choked.

"Hush!" whispered Minnie. She drew Rosanna into her own room, closed the door, and switched on the light.

"Oh, my precious lamb!" she said. "What did she do to you? Oh, why didn't I come sooner? You look fit to die. Come, dearie, and let your Minnie do for you tonight."

She took Rosanna on her lap and tenderly undressed her. Then she folded a warm kimono around the shivering, nervous child and, sitting down in a deep chair, took her on her lap and held her tight.

Rosanna stiffened and sat up. "Suppose she comes in?" she said.

"No danger!" said Minnie. "I turned the key." She laughed. "If she wants to see you again she will have to wait until tomorrow, no matter what. I don't intend to see that look on your pretty dear face much longer. Now tell your Minnie just what happened."

"I don't seem to be able to remember much about it," said the tired and frightened child; "only when I came home,— and oh, Minnie, we *did* have such a good time! — there was grandmother at the door instead of you. And she seems to think that I have done something that has disgraced her, and she won't tell me anything at all until tomorrow, only she told me to come to my room and go to bed if I could get to bed without you and she said you were

untrustworthy — and — and that she had sent you to your room to stay until tomorrow, and then she is going to make you go, and oh, Minnie, Minnie, what *shall* I ever do without you?"

"There, there! Minnie will find some way of staying near you if she has to wear a wig and make believe she is somebody else entirely."

"What *have* I done?" asked Rosanna. "Was it all because we went to Fontaine Ferry? Mrs. Hargrave said I might go."

"A little of it is that," said Minnie, "but the worst of her madness is because you have been playing with a little girl clean out of your own class, as she puts it, and she blames everybody. Everybody that she can discharge has got to go — and I guess that will be about everybody but you."

"Then I might as well die," said Rosanna. "I can't go back and live the way I used to live. You know I can't do it, Minnie. I can't; I just *can't!* Oh, Minnie, it seems as though I had only been happy for three weeks in all my life, and what shall I do? I do love Helen, and she is just as nice as I am, and so are her mother and father. Oh, don't you suppose Uncle Robert can fix it?"

"He didn't come home with her," said Minnie. "When he does the mischief will be done. It is just her sinful pride, if I do say it about your grandmother, and sure as sure there will come a day and that soon, when her pride will have a fall. I only wish I could run away with you, dearie.

But you will have to be brave, and I will see you as soon as ever I can. You know my telephone number, and if she ever goes out you just call me up."

"I don't feel brave," whispered Rosanna, hiding her face on Minnie's shoulder. "I don't see how I will ever bear to stay alone all night."

"That you needn't if you would like your Minnie," said she. "Just you get into your bed and be quiet, and I will be back in a minute." She tucked Rosanna between the sheets, and hurried away as silent as a shadow.

In a few minutes she returned, ready for the night. She drew a big couch close beside Rosanna's little bed and lay down.

"There we are!" she said, taking Rosanna's hand. "Now look here, Rosanna. In the morning when your grandmother talks to you, don't try to talk back, and whatever you do, *don't be afraid.* Just let her talk, and tell her to see Mrs. Hargrave. She has seen me all she ever wants to, I guess, but Mrs. Hargrave is not afraid of anybody. I wish she was here. Now you will remember what I say, won't you, dear? Don't be afraid."

"What will she do to Helen?" asked Rosanna.

"Do to Helen?" said Minnie, sitting up. "Do to Helen? Well, she won't get within shouting distance of Helen. I guess I have not been shut up in my room all evening so as anyone would notice it. The Culvers are all prepared, and Helen won't

know anything about it until long after it is all over."

"That is good," sighed Rosanna. "I can't bear to have Helen unhappy as I am. It does seem as though I have to be unhappy such a lot, don't you think so, Minnie?"

Minnie leaned over and kissed her.

"Poor child!" she said softly. "Never you mind! I have a feeling that there is something good coming out of this. I don't know what, but you must bear whatever your grandmother says to you with that thought in mind, and remember what I say."

"I will try," promised Rosanna, and then because she was exhausted with the shock of the evening after the tiresome but glorious day Rosanna, clasping Minnie's hand tight, went to sleep immediately.

When she awoke next day it was very late, and the sun was shining through the flowered chintz curtains. She felt something queer and crackly in the bed by her foot, and threw back the covers. There was a letter tied to her ankle by a piece of ribbon. Rosanna could not help laughing, it was such a funny place to put a letter.

"Dearie," it read, "we slept like tops both of us, and now I must get out of here before your grandmother wakes up. I am going to tie this to your ankle because that is the only place she would never think to look if she should come in while you are

still asleep, and go to looking through things, though the saints know there is nothing she is not welcome to see as we have every button on, and not a rip anywhere.

"I take this pencil in hand to tell you that I stayed all night and held your hand. At any rate you were holding mine when I woke up not long ago.

"Now I am going to leave right off, as I do not care to eat again under this roof, things being as they are. I don't know about your going down to breakfast. If you wake late enough, she will be over at Mrs. Hargrave's and you could have your breakfast up here. Just ring the bell three times. I will fix it with Hannah to bring you a tray as soon as ever you call.

"Don't forget what I told you last night about being afraid. There is nothing for you to be afraid of, and you can do for yourself now just as nicely as though you were a grown-up young lady. And don't forget that just as soon as your Minnie is married you can come to see me just as often as you please, and I don't think it will hurt you to come and see your own nursemaid in her own little house which is already being paid for in instalments, and you can cook candy in my kitchen which is to be blue and white in honor of the playhouse, and we will feel honored to have you, and no one to object whatever you do.

"I must go now. Oh, dear, I'll worry every sec-

ond: but don't you fret one mite, Rosanna dear, as there is nothing at all to worry about.

"Your Minnie."

Her kind, good Minnie! There was one who loved her anyway. And she knew Helen loved her.

She determined to be brave. When she thought everything over, she could not feel that she had done anything wrong in the least. But when her grandmother talked to her, she always felt guilty of everything that her grandmother wanted her to feel guilty about. She dreaded seeing Mrs. Horton. There was a knock on the door and there was her breakfast, the best that cook could send up.

Rosanna was very hungry, and there was nothing left but plates and cups and saucers when she finished and pressed the bell button. Hannah hurried up and took the tray.

"We think you had better not say anything about this until you see what your grandmother is going to do," said Hannah and hurried off while Rosanna settled herself to wait.

Presently the door opened. Mrs. Horton, more pale and angry than ever, came in. She was carrying a plate. There was a glass of water and a slice of bread on it. She set it down hard on the table.

CHAPTER XV

"THERE is your breakfast," said Mrs. Horton, looking at Rosanna with her steely eyes. "Bread and water will be part of your punishment."

"I am not hungry," said Rosanna in a low tone.

"Then you may leave it there until you are," said her grandmother. "Bread and water will be your fare until you have apologized to me and have proved that you regret your disgraceful conduct while I was away."

"I don't think that I did anything that was disgraceful, grandmother," said Rosanna gently.

"You will when I get through with you," said her grandmother grimly. "I hope I may be able to bring you to your senses. I am only sorry you are too big a girl to punish as I would like to punish you."

"Have you seen Mrs. Hargrave?" asked Rosanna.

"She is away. I suppose that is one reason that you went wild."

"I did nothing without asking her if it would be all right," said Rosanna.

"That seems impossible," said Mrs. Horton.

"It is true," asserted Rosanna.

"Rosanna, be careful what you say!" exclaimed her grandmother angrily.

Remembering what Minnie had advised, Rosanna said nothing.

Her grandmother continued, "I have thought this all over and you know as well as I do what you have done, and how you have offended me, and I see no use in talking about it at all. You will stay here on a diet of bread and water until you are in a different frame of mind. I don't need to have you tell me how you feel, or what you think. A look at your face is quite sufficient. You are stubborn and unrepentant. Perhaps after a week or two spent thinking, you will see things in a different light. You will not be allowed any privileges at all. You will not even have your lessons. When your Uncle Robert comes home, you will not see him unless you have repented enough to be allowed to come down to your meals. Do you understand?"

Something queer and hard and grown-up came into Rosanna's soul. She looked her angry grandmother straight in the eye.

"Grandmother," she said very gently, "I hope you will not say anything that you will be sorry for."

"Don't be impertinent!" said Mrs. Horton.

"I don't mean to be," said Rosanna.

"You are!" said Mrs. Horton.

Rosanna turned around. "Oh, grandmother!" she commenced, then stopped.

"Oh, grandmother what?" asked Mrs. Horton.

"Nothing. Excuse me," said Rosanna.

"Then that's all," said Mrs. Horton. "You understand me?"

"I think I do," said Rosanna. She did not look up, and Mrs. Horton, unable to catch her eye, left the room.

Lunch time came, and with it her grandmother with a fresh glass of water and another slice of bread. Immediately after, Hannah appeared with a tray of luncheon.

Rosanna was really not hungry, but she was wise enough to know that it was a very bad thing to go without eating, especially when one has decided on a very serious and terrifying step. The afternoon dragged away.

At five her grandmother came in and offered her still another glass of water and slice of bread. Rosanna thanked her.

"Have you anything to say to me?" asked Mrs. Horton.

"No, grandmother," replied Rosanna, "only that I am very sorry that you are angry with me, and I hope some day you will be sorry too that you did not love me when I was here to love."

"Do you think of leaving?" said Mrs. Horton sneeringly. "You had better tell me where you are going so I can send your clothes. I believe that is

the way they do with the sort of people you have been making friends with."

Rosanna did not reply.

"Let me catch you leaving this room!" said Mrs. Horton. She went out and closed the door. Rosanna nodded her head. Her mind was made up. She crossed to the dainty dresser, and switching on the lights did something she had never done in her life. Rosanna was not vain in the least, but if you could have seen her then, turning this way and that, lifting her long, heavy curls, wadding them on top of her head, or trying them in a long braid, you would have said that she seemed to be a very vain little girl indeed.

She appeared satisfied at last with what she saw in the glass, and noticed that it was growing quite dark.

She went over to her little bed, and knelt.

"Please, dear Lord," she whispered, "I don't want to do anything wrong. Please help me because I am so afraid. And now that Minnie is gone and Helen, please give me somebody to love me. Amen."

She felt better after that, and sat down by the window. It was almost dark. . . .

When Mrs. Horton left Rosanna, she went down to the big, dim library and, seating herself at her desk, commenced to write letters. She found it difficult to collect her thoughts and there was a bad feeling in her heart, as though she was wrong, as

though she was doing something unwise, unkind, and perhaps really wicked. But she thrust it out of her thoughts because she didn't think that she ever *could* do anything really wrong.

Something pressed hard on her heart, and she grew very restless. Some impulse led her to go to the telephone and call Mrs. Hargrave on the long distance line.

Mrs. Hargrave, who was very much bored by Cousin Hendy, was delighted to hear her old friend's voice. She did not let Mrs. Horton get a word in edgewise for the first two minutes. She seemed to think Mrs. Horton didn't care how much that telephone call was going to cost. She asked how she was, and how Robert was, and had he found his lost friend, and she certainly hoped he had, and when had they returned, and oh, wasn't it too bad Robert had been unable to come with his mother?

Then like a person who saves the best to the last, she asked with a note of triumph in her voice:

"Well, how do you think your darling Rosanna looks? I suppose you know she has gained five pounds while you were away. I think she is vastly improved. And so happy! My dear, of course, it is hard for us to realize it, but I think once in awhile it is a good thing to get right out and let the home people do for themselves and learn to depend on themselves a little. Don't you?"

Mrs. Horton smiled grimly. "It has certainly

not worked out here to any great advantage, during my absence," she said.

"What?" asked Mrs. Hargrave. "I don't believe I hear you."

Mrs. Horton spoke into the telephone with careful distinctness. "If you do not know what has happened during my absence," she said, "I will tell you the state of affairs existing here in my home now, and you may be able to guess that something serious has occurred. In the first place Rosanna is in her room on a diet of bread and water. My chauffeur, with his pushing wife and ordinary child, has been discharged, and told to vacate tomorrow. Rosanna's maid, Minnie, had been discharged and is gone. All the servants have had severe scoldings."

There was a long silence, then Mrs. Hargrave said, "Are you crazy?"

"Not at all!" said Mrs. Horton.

"I will be home tomorrow morning," said Mrs. Hargrave. "I'll have to get there as soon as I can to keep you from making more of your dreadful mistakes. In the meantime, I am ashamed of you. Don't you go near Rosanna with your cutting speeches until I see you. Oh, I can't talk to you! Good-night!"

She rang off and Mrs. Horton slowly replaced the receiver. No, she did not intend to go near Rosanna. Rosanna was settled for the night so far as she was concerned. On her way up to bed, she

opened the door of Rosanna's room, and listened. The child was sleeping so calmly that her grandmother could not even hear her breathe. She could see the little mound that Rosanna's body made on the bed, but she did not go into the room. She went on to her own room and sat down to think. The light was dim; just one small night light burning, and Mrs. Horton sat down in her favorite lounging chair and gave herself up to her unhappy thoughts. She was conscious of a feeling of wrongdoing yet she did not recognize it as such. Instead, she was sure that she had been very deeply wronged. After all her teaching, after all the years she had spent guarding Rosanna, on the first chance the child had slipped away from all she had been told. She shuddered when she thought of it, remembering her own young sister and her unhappy fate. She did not realize that she was judging all humanity by the commonplace young scamp her sister had unfortunately married. It did not occur to her to ask herself if all the fine young men and women her son knew were also of that type.

The next thing she knew, the cold woke her. It was dawn, and she had slept in her chair all night. She was chilled to the bone. She slowly undressed, and feeling sore and stiff, took a hot bath and wrapped up in a warm kimono. She was about to lie down and finish the night when she thought of Rosanna.

Mrs. Horton stepped into a pair of slippers and

crossed the room. As she passed her desk, she looked up full at the picture of her dead son and his wife, Rosanna's father and mother. She stopped. Somehow those faces would not let her pass. They held her with sad, questioning eyes.

"What are you doing with our little child?" they seemed to say. "Have you loved her, mother? Have you been tender with her? Have you tried to understand her? Have you remembered that she is just a baby?"

Mrs. Horton thought of Rosanna in her beautiful, lonely room way down the corridor. She commenced to have a very guilty feeling.

"Have you loved her?" asked the two sad faces. "Have you been tender with her, mother?"

"I have done my duty by the child," answered Mrs. Horton. She went down the corridor to Rosanna's room, her head held high. The cold, pallid light of the hour just before day filled the house.

Mrs. Horton opened Rosanna's door and went in. She looked long at the little bed as though she could not believe her eyes. Then crossing, she opened the bathroom door, and then the clothespress, calling Rosanna's name sharply. There was no reply. The little dog followed her into the room and went sniffing and whining about. Mrs. Horton rushed back to the bed and saw that the little mound she had thought in the dark the night before was Rosanna was only a neat pile of little dresses.

Rosanna was gone!

Mrs. Horton remembered that the child was very fond of a wide seat in the library. She hurried down the broad stairs, expecting to find that the lonely child had crept down there to sit awhile and, like herself, had dropped to sleep, but the big room was empty. Mrs. Horton's heart commenced to hammer in a very strange way. Of course Rosanna must be in the house somewhere, and although she felt it was a very undignified thing to do, she went from room to room making a close and careful search of every nook where a child could hide. There was not a single sign of the little girl. Mrs. Horton had hoped to find Rosanna without calling the servants, but as she looked and looked, and the knowledge came to her that perhaps Rosanna was not in the house at all, she was filled with terror. She commenced to press the electric buttons frantically and, wide-eyed and half dressed, the household commenced to gather from the servants' wing.

She managed somehow to let them know that Rosanna had disappeared, and everyone commenced a search that stretched to the playhouse, the pony stable and the garden.

She staggered up to her room and with shaking hands commenced to dress herself. The two sad faces on the wall stared at her.

"Oh, mother, mother, where is our baby?" they asked.

"Gone — gone —" said Mrs. Horton.

CHAPTER XVI

ROSANNA was gone.

When or where or how no one could tell. By eight o'clock on that dreadful morning the neighborhood had been scoured, the alleys searched and the police were talking darkly of kidnapers and of dragging the river.

Mrs. Horton knew that no one could have entered the house, but she was at a loss to see how Rosanna could have been taken out or have gone out without being seen, even if she had not gone before dark. The neighborhood was full of children, and no one, young or old, had seen Rosanna, who was well known by sight by everyone on the block.

At quarter past eight, to Mrs. Horton's surprise, Mrs. Hargrave walked in. It was evident by her distressed look and trembling hands that she had learned what had happened.

"Well, Virginia, you have done it this time!" she said. "I have been telling you for the last forty years that your unholy pride would get you into trouble, and it has. If anything happens to hurt Rosanna — well, I just won't tell you what I think; I reckon you know without my saying it.

Now begin at the beginning and tell me in as few words as possible just what you did to her. I don't want to know now what you thought *she* had done or what you thought about it yourself. I want to know *what you did to Rosanna.*"

Mrs. Hargrave seated herself on the edge of a chair as though she might fly off at any moment. She listened intently while Mrs. Horton, still thinking of the accusing eyes in the two pictures, told how she had punished Rosanna.

When she had finished, Mrs. Hargrave spoke. "I don't see how you will ever forgive yourself."

"I couldn't bear to have her grow up rough and coarse like so many of these modern children. I wanted to keep her away from all lowering influences."

"Fiddle-dee-*dee!*" said Mrs. Hargrave, beating a tiny hand on the arm of her chair. "Fiddle-dee-dee and fiddle*sticks* with your 'lowering influences'! What did you do but leave her to her own thoughts and no one to talk to but a stiff old woman and a houseful of servants? Well, you have done it! What are you doing to find her?"

"I have put it in the hands of the police, and they have an extra shift of detectives searching the city." Mrs. Horton trembled so she could scarcely speak.

"Detectives, yes!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "Walking around the alley, two and two, looking for all the little girls with long, black curls. That's about

all *that* will do for you. Have you called Minnie?"

"I don't know where she lives," parried Mrs. Horton.

"Well, I *do!*" said Mrs. Hargrave.

She hurried to the telephone, and after a moment returned. "She will be right over," she said.

"That does not seem necessary," said Mrs. Horton. She dreaded to see Minnie.

"It does to me," said Mrs. Hargrave. She softened a little. "Now, my dear," she said, "you are not able to carry this thing through alone. A frightful thing has happened, and it is likely that we may never see our little Rosanna again." She choked back the tears. "Have you spoken to Mr. Culver?"

"Who is he?" asked Mrs. Horton. "The name sounds familiar."

"It ought to!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "A splendid fellow — your chauffeur."

"I thought his name was Carver," said Mrs. Horton. "You all write so badly. No, I have not seen him; he is the cause, or part of the cause of this dreadful affair."

"Not so much as I am if you are going to look at it like that," said Mrs. Hargrave. "Next to Rosanna, his daughter is the nicest little girl I ever saw. I am going to do something for her some day, and I will thank you, my dear, not to abuse her. Now I want you to send for John. *I* want to see him if you don't."

"I think the police captain saw him," said Mrs. Horton.

"Shall I ring that bell or will you?" demanded her friend.

Mrs. Horton rose.

"Send for the chauffeur," she ordered the house boy.

"I think they's gone, ma'am," he said.

"Well, you run as fast as ever you can and tell them not to go," said Mrs. Hargrave. "Mrs. Horton wants to see both Mr. and Mrs. Culver."

The house boy bolted.

The Culvers came gravely in. Both looked pale and distressed. Mrs. Horton studied Mrs. Culver with surprise. Well dressed, beautiful and refined, she was not the woman Mrs. Horton had expected to see.

Mrs. Hargrave took charge.

"Good-morning, my dears," she said. "There is just one thing for us all to do now, and that is to put aside all personal feelings, just as you would want your friends to do if something dreadful had happened to our dear Helen, and all work together to see if we cannot save our little Rosanna from whatever fate has overtaken her. I wondered if you have ever heard her say anything that would lead you to think that if she did leave this house of her own accord, she would go to any one person?"

"Only Minnie," said Mrs. Culver in a voice as cultivated and low as Mrs. Hargrave's own.

"I have sent for Minnie," said Mrs. Hargrave. "I talked to her over the telephone and she knows nothing at all about Rosanna, but she is coming over at once. I want you to tell us, Mrs. Culver, if you ever heard Rosanna say anything that would lead you to think that she would run away."

Mrs. Culver hesitated, then with a flush said:

"I think it is only my duty to say that Rosanna was the loneliest child I have ever seen. If she is found, I hope that something can be done to place her among people who will give her not only care, but love."

"How dare you say that I did not love her?" cried Mrs. Horton.

"I say it because I love Rosanna," said Mrs. Culver, "and I cannot help thinking that if my child should be left motherless, I would rather wish her dead than brought up as you are trying to bring her up, Mrs. Horton.

"Oh, why, *why* did you not let her have her friends? If you object to us because we are simple people and poor, why did you not see to it that she had friends in her 'own set' as you call it? And as for the friendship between my child and Rosanna, we had your own letter for our permission."

"We certainly did," said Mrs. Hargrave.

"I cannot talk about this now," said Mrs. Horton. "Please leave me."

"Don't you go a step farther than your own

house, John," said Mrs. Hargrave briskly. "I am going to give orders for awhile. Mrs. Horton, as you see, is overcome. We need you. Take one of the cars and ride about and see what you can see, John, and you, my dear, stand ready to do anything that you can, like the fine girl that you are." She smiled and the two left the room, tears streaming down the face of Mrs. Culver. As they went slowly through the garden, Minnie burst through the gate, and rushed toward the house. She did not even see them. She hurried to the library, and hesitating for a second to pull herself together, knocked on the door and entered as Mrs. Horton called, "Come!"

Minnie bowed, and Mrs. Hargrave at once said: "Minnie, can you imagine where Rosanna would go if she left home, when she was as unhappy as she was last night?"

"Only to my house," said Minnie. "If anybody abused her as I will say they *did*, yet mentioning no names, and if anybody made a prisoner of her, and spent most of their time year in and out making her unhappy, and with you away, Mrs. Hargrave, I know if my darling Miss Rosanna was let to go anywhere of her own free will, she would come to her Minnie who loves her. That child needed to be cuddled and loved, Mrs. Hargrave, ma'am, and I was the only person about here who ever held her on a lap, and I know she would start for me. But you'll not find her for one long while. How she got

out of the house I don't know. But why she went I can pretty well guess, and what if a gang of robbers should meet Miss Rosanna going along all alone and her so beautiful with her long curls and pretty dresses? What would they do but pick her up right off, and carry her away and hold her for some people who didn't appreciate her when they had her, to pay them a fortune to get her back?" Here Minnie commenced to cry.

"Don't do that!" said Mrs. Horton sharply. "I can't stand it!"

Minnie turned to her.

"Mrs. Horton, now that the dear child is stolen and by this time probably murdered and buried, and no one the wiser, I think it is only right to tell you that it is all your fault. While I was working here and felt that I could do for Miss Rosanna, I was careful to say nothing at all, and it can never be laid to me that I said one word against you to your granddaughter. No, ma'am, Mrs. Horton, I was true to the wages I earned. I never said one word even to my young man about the way you froze all the happiness out of that dear departed child. And what I could do I did. I tucked her in at night and always kissed her, and when I found out how she wanted to be held tight, I held her and told her fairy stories. And I found out all I could about her father and mother from the other servants, and from cook who has been here for forty

years or so, and I told her all the funny things her father did when he was a little boy, and she said it made her feel real acquainted with 'em.

"And she heard or read about putting candles and flowers in front of the statues and paintings of the saints, and she wanted to do it with her mother and father, but she knew she would be told not, so she used to put little bunches of flowers back of the pictures between them and the wall, and mercy knows if they have stained the wall paper. And when they was faded I used to take them out, and oh dear, she was so sweet!"

Minnie choked, Mrs. Hargrave cried quite openly, and Mrs. Horton, deadly pale and dry-eyed, sat shaking like a leaf, her eyes fixed on the painting of her son on the opposite wall.

"And I think it was a *shame* and a SIN and a CRIME," said Minnie hotly, "that nobody but me did these things for her, Mrs. Hargrave, ma'am!

"And now she's gone, and I'll say she's somewhere dead of a broken heart just because she wasn't let to have a single friend and that Helen, the nicest child I ever did see except Miss Rosanna, and what if she *was* poor? And I don't know what good blood is if it don't show in nice manners and pretty speech and pleasant thoughts and Helen Culver had nothing else.

"Oh, I just feel we will never see Miss Rosanna again, and what did she wear off?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Horton, speaking for the first time.

"You better find out!" said Minnie tartly.

"The detectives know," said Mrs. Horton.

"Oh, Mrs. Horton I sound hard on you, but it's all true, and I can't take it back, and I'm not working here or I wouldn't have said it: but I wish there was something I could do. What *can* I do? I'd like to pick up her room if I might, please."

"The detectives do not want it touched," said Mrs. Horton. "There is nothing you can do."

Minnie, wiping her eyes, vanished in the direction of the kitchen to see the cook, and Mrs. Horton turned to Mrs. Hargrave.

"Does it seem to you that these people have any right to attack me like this?" she asked with dry lips. "I was not hard with Rosanna. I loaded her with toys and pleasures, and I think they are all very hard on me."

"What do you think about yourself?" asked Mrs. Hargrave gently. "Did you ever hold her and laugh with her, and tell her stories?"

"No; it was not my way," said Mrs. Horton.

"But it was the way of a child," said Mrs. Hargrave. "The way of a tender little motherless child! I do not want to be hard on you, but I have told you for forty years that your pride would be your undoing."

"The telephone!" said Mrs. Horton. She rushed to the instrument and talked for a little

with a member of the police force, then she came dragging back to the library.

"They have finished searching the hospitals, and nowhere is there a child answering to the description of Rosanna. I was actually hoping to find her in one of the hospitals."

Suddenly she buried her proud head in her hands and broke into hard sobs. Mrs. Hargrave went over and put an arm around the bowed shoulders. Presently Mrs. Horton said: "If we only get her back! I never meant to be hard, but I did try so hard to bring her up so she would never have to live and die as unhappily as my little sister, and I felt that if she could be made unbending and proud she would never choose unworthy friends."

"But you were wrong, my dear," said Mrs. Hargrave. "Don't you see it now? There is nothing to be gained in this life by remaining narrow. We must know life and our fellowmen in order to be able to choose wisely and well. How can we tell the worthy from the unworthy unless we have known enough of people to be able to recognize both the good and bad? Oh, Virginia! I feel that Rosanna will come back to you, to us, and we must remember that we are old women, and she is a child, and like calls to like. We must remember that God expects us to love and guide her but she must have friends and outside interests."

"Oh, if she only, only comes back!" cried Mrs. Horton.

CHAPTER XVII

THE dreadful day dragged to a close, while the detectives and the entire police force scoured the city and the surrounding country.

For the one day they had succeeded in keeping the disappearance out of the papers, hoping that if Rosanna was actually in the hands of kidnapers they would not be frightened into taking her away or harming her to insure their own safety.

Mrs. Hargrave went restlessly back and forth between her own house and Mrs. Horton's, while Mrs. Horton walked endlessly up and down near the telephone, listening and praying for news and imagining horrible things.

Throwing her pride to the winds, Minnie settled herself at Mrs. Horton's, determined to be on hand if her darling Miss Rosanna needed her. Minnie, for all her dismal predictions, did not give up hope but the thought of what might be happening to Rosanna almost drove her wild. She could not keep out of Rosanna's room, yet she could not bear to touch a thing that the delicate little hands had handled. She wouldn't dust. Rosanna's brush and comb lay on the dresser, and Minnie looked at them tenderly, thinking of the long curls and won-

dering where and how that lovely head was resting.

Mr. Culver went down town to a friend of his and borrowed a small car. In this he scoured the city, and penetrated the most disreputable portions with carefully worded questions concerning a child that had strayed away. At lunch time Helen asked him if he would take her over to see Mary and Gwenny. Helen had been spending her money for Gwenny, and wanted to get her purchases where she could not see them and have them remind her of Rosanna. Poor Helen had cried herself almost sick. With all her broken, loving little heart she had prayed that she might be of some help in finding Rosanna, for she too was sure that she would be restored.

Mr. Culver was glad to take Helen over to Gwenny's, so Helen did the things up in a neat parcel and they started.

"Don't you suppose if everyone knew that Rosanna was lost that they would all help to look for her?" asked Helen.

"It will all come out in to-morrow morning's paper," answered Mr. Culver. "They were afraid of scaring the people who are holding her, if someone is holding her. The police hoped to find her before the kidnapers were scared into carrying her a long ways off, or hiding her perhaps in some of the caves around here. You see, Helen, with a family as rich as the Hortons are, a child is sometimes held for what they call ransom; that is, an

immense sum of money which the parents are glad to pay rather than have the child killed."

Mary and Gwenny were greatly shocked at the news, and wanted to hear all about it over and over. Mr. Culver went on an errand and Helen waited there with the two girls.

"Are they sure she wasn't hurt when she was trying to go somewhere?" asked Mary.

"Mary saw a little girl run over by an automobile last night," said Gwenny.

"She wasn't really run over," corrected Mary, "but pretty near."

"You don't think it was Rosanna?" cried Helen eagerly.

"Oh, no, it wasn't Rosanna," said Mary. "Rosanna never had on a dress like that; it was just the kind of a dress I would wear and, besides, her hair was cut short. And she wasn't pretty like Rosanna."

"Did you see her close up?" asked Helen curiously.

"Not very," confessed Mary. "She was all covered with dust where the automobile had rolled her into the gutter, and her head was cut, and she was unconscious: but she didn't look like Rosanna any more than I do. I was just wondering if they had been to the hospitals."

"Yes, they went through them all," said Helen. "There were lots of children that had been hurt one way and another, and there was one little girl

who had been hurt on the head, and couldn't tell who she was, but she was not Rosanna. The detectives took a picture of Rosanna along so they could be sure."

"That must have been the little girl I saw hurt," said Mary. "It was right on Third Street, and they took her down to the Morton Memorial Hospital right away. But it wasn't Rosanna."

"No, of course not," sighed Helen.

"Of course not!" echoed Mary.

"I wish it *was* Rosanna," said Helen with a sob. "I wish it was!"

Leaving these thoughts to worry Mary and Gwenny, Helen went off with her father, and in the course of time reached home.

There was a message from Mrs. Horton asking Helen to come to her as soon as she could.

"I wish you would go with me," said Helen wistfully to her mother.

"I do not think I had better," said Mrs. Culver. "She asked particularly for you. Don't get excited whatever is said. I trust you to act as though I was at your side. You know, darling, that I always trust you."

Helen burst into tears. "Oh, mother, dear, dear mother, think of poor, poor Rosanna who has no mother at all to go to for advice!"

Mrs. Culver hugged her little girl tight, wondering if little Rosanna had perhaps gone to the young mother she had lost so long ago.

When Helen entered the library, she found that old Mrs. Horton had collapsed, and was lying on the sofa covered with a blanket. There was a chill in the large, dark room. Mrs. Hargrave, very sober and haggard looking, drew Helen to her and kissed her. Then to Helen's amazement Mrs. Horton kissed her too.

"My dear little girl," she said feebly, "I want to tell you that I find I have made a great mistake, and I am sorry for everything. When Rosanna comes back, I want you two little girls to be the best of friends. And I want you to ask your father to stay with me. Perhaps he will do it if you ask him. Mrs. Hargrave says that he is working on an invention of some sort. He will certainly have as much spare time to give to his studies here as he could in any business I know of. I want you to tell him all this from me."

"Thank you so much," said Helen in her soft little voice. Then there being nothing that she could think of to say, she stood waiting for Mrs. Horton to speak. But Mrs. Horton wearily turned her gray face to the wall and sighed.

"Would you mind if I go up and speak to Minnie?" Helen asked timidly.

"Not at all," answered Mrs. Horton. "It comforts me to know that there is a child in the house. I think you will find Minnie in Rosanna's room. You know the way."

Again she turned to the wall as though she had

parted with hope, and Helen ran quietly up the broad stairs and down the corridor to Rosanna's room. Minnie was there sitting in her little sewing chair, mending a dress of Rosanna's. Her tears fell on it as she worked.

"Don't do that, Minnie!" she said, throwing her arm around her. "I know we will find Rosanna, and then everything will come out right."

She sat down on Minnie's lap, and told her everything that her father had said, and all that Mrs. Horton had said, and then all about her visit with Mary and Gwenny.

"As far as I go," said Minnie crossly, "the sooner they get all this in the paper the better I will like it. Why, if there is one thing on earth more than another that will stir folks up it is a lost child. All the people, and the Boy Scouts and everybody will be hunting around everywhere."

"And where do the Girl Scouts come in?" asked Helen hotly. "They will do just as good work as the Boy Scouts will." She got up and commenced to walk around the room. Minnie, having finished her sewing, arose too and after a moment's thought produced from somewhere a silk duster, and began wiping off the chairs and other furniture.

Helen watched her idly as she moved about the room, then the two large portraits caught her attention.

"Wasn't Rosanna's mother beautiful?" she said, staring. "Her eyes seem to look right at you

as if she was trying to tell you something."

"I don't doubt she is, the dear saint!" said Minnie. "You can't begin to know what a heap Rosanna thinks of those pictures. She used to want to keep flowers in front of each one the way they do in churches in front of the saints; but she didn't dare because she knew her grandmother wouldn't let her. So she used to pick posies and tie little bunches and slip them down behind the picture next the wall. She asked me if I didn't think it would mean just as much. And I know it did, the lamb, the dear, dear lamb! I told her grandmother about it too, every word.

"Why, the day you went to Fontaine Ferry — gracious, it seems a year ago! — she fixed a little bit of a wreath of sweet peas and tucked it behind the picture. It must be there yet all withered."

Minnie went over to the picture, and taking the heavy frame in both hands held the picture away from the wall a little.

Something fell to the floor, but it was not the withered flowers.

When Minnie looked down, she stared and stared and, still staring, crumpled down on her knees, wild, round eyes on the object. Helen ran to her.

"Oh, oh, oh," moaned Minnie, "have I gone mad?"

On the floor tied by a ribbon, was Rosanna's beautiful hair!

For a space Minnie and Helen stood as though

they had been frozen. Minnie touched the long, soft locks and again moaned but all at once Helen commenced to dance up and down.

"Now we have her, now we have her!" she cried. "Come down and tell Mrs. Horton, Minnie! We have found Rosanna! Come, come!"

She tried to drag Minnie to the door, but Minnie pulled back.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Why, don't you see?" cried Helen. "She cut it off because she didn't want anybody to know who she was, and everyone always looked at her lovely hair. She gave it to her mother. Oh, *don't* you see, Minnie? And then she started for your house, and the automobile hit her, and I just *know* that is our Rosanna in the hospital! Of course Mary was sure it was not Rosanna on account of her hair. Oh, come, let's tell her grandmother. She does truly and truly love Rosanna, Minnie. Come, let's tell her!"

"Yes, and then find out that it isn't Rosanna at all and break her heart for sure," said the practical Minnie. "You go down and tell Mrs. Hargrave will she please come up here a minute, and you see that she comes. She will know what's best to do."

Minnie bent over the long locks so carefully brushed and tied, and again her tears flowed while Helen sped down the stairs on her errand.

Mrs. Hargrave, who had plenty of common sense, followed at once, and her shock and surprise when

she saw the curls of dark hair equalled theirs.

"Minnie is quite right," she said, nodding her head. "Mrs. Horton is in a very bad condition. I feel as though the little girl in the hospital may be Rosanna, but if we should find ourselves mistaken I don't know what the effect on Mrs. Horton would be. Say good-by to Mrs. Horton, Helen, and go tell your mother what we have found. Then ask your father to bring you around to my house in the car. You, Minnie, slip out the back door and meet me outside. Don't say one word until we see who this child is. I don't see why they have not reported her if it is Rosanna. She must have been asked to tell her name, and Rosanna is not grown up enough to think of making up a name for the occasion. Besides she would be glad to come home. If it is Rosanna — let me hurry!"

One by one they carefully left the house. It was late, and Mrs. Horton seemed to be dozing. Telling the cook to put off getting dinner until Mrs. Horton had rested, Minnie slipped out, and reached Mrs. Hargrave's house just as the car drove up. Mrs. Hargrave came briskly trotting along the walk a moment later and was helped in.

"It is a good thing that I am a trustee and director over at that hospital," she remarked, "so they won't try to fuss about our seeing the child, whoever she is. If it is only Rosanna —"

It was a swift ride. Every heart was beating quickly. If it was only Rosanna!

Entering the hospital, Mrs. Hargrave went to the superintendent's office, where a firm, stern looking woman met them.

"A child was hurt by an automobile last night and brought here," she said briefly.

Mrs. Hargrave interrupted her. "I want to see her," she said.

"It is not the Horton child, if that is what you mean," said the superintendent. "This was a short-haired child in a very ordinary dress. She was struck on the head and was unconscious for hours. We are surprised that no inquiry has been made."

"I am making one now," said Mrs. Hargrave crisply. "I said I wanted to *see* this child."

"You know it is against the rules, Mrs. Hargrave," the superintendent objected.

"Fiddle-dee-dee!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "What ward is she in?"

The superintendent gave up. She had known that she would. Mrs. Hargrave always had her own way. She led them down to the elevator, where they waited and waited with what patience they could gather until the car came slowly down and took them up to the general wards.

They tiptoed in. The little girl was bandaged and pale and sleeping heavily; but oh, joy of joys, it *was* Rosanna!

CHAPTER XVIII

"And it was just like a fairy story," said Helen, telling her mother about it afterwards, "because even while the nurse was telling how the little girl had not spoken a word, or even looked at anybody, Rosanna just opened those big eyes of hers, and said, 'Hello, Helen!' And I simply didn't know what to say, so I just said 'Hello,' too."

It was indeed Rosanna, and Rosanna was herself again, aside from a very badly bumped head that had come near being a very seriously hurt head. She was too weak and ill to seem to wonder why she was in a hospital room with a couple of trained nurses feeling of her pulse, and dear Mrs. Hargrave with the tears rolling down her faintly pink old cheeks.

All Mrs. Hargrave said was, "We will be back in a minute, Rosanna," and shooed everybody out into the hall, even the stern superintendent.

"Now then," said Mrs. Hargrave with one peek back to see that the nurse that had stayed was doing her full duty, "now the thing is, how are we going to get her home?"

"Oh, she can't go home," said the superintendent in a shocked voice. "She ought to stay here for three or four days anyway."

"Fiddle-dee-*dee!*" said Mrs. Hargrave. "Home

is the place for her, and besides I have reasons for wanting her to be under the care of her grandmother right away."

"I can't take the responsibility," said the superintendent stubbornly. "You will have to see the house doctor, Mrs. Hargrave."

"Very well," said Mrs. Hargrave. She turned to a nurse passing. "Go get Doctor Smith, my dear; tell him Mrs. Hargrave wants him at once."

Doctor Smith came sooner than the superintendent hoped he would.

"Well," he said, "if it is possible to get her home without jarring her, I think it would be a good thing. Her head is not injured, but her nerves are shaken, and if she can be at home in her own room she will regain her strength very quickly. I want you to take a trained nurse with you, however."

"Of course!" said Mrs. Hargrave briskly. "Now how shall we take her? In an ambulance, or can we manage in the car? It is very large."

"Could one of you hold her?" said the doctor.

"I can and will," said Minnie decidedly. "I know just how she likes to be held, the lamb!"

"Then she can go now if you like," said the doctor, and the superintendent pursed up her mouth and stalked downstairs, scorning the elevator.

How smoothly Mr. Culver drove that car! Not a jounce or bump disturbed the pale little patient, and he "drove the car at a walk" as Mrs. Hargrave had asked him.

When they reached home, Mrs. Hargrave asked Rosanna if she could be comfortable there for a couple of minutes, and seeing her nod feebly, she went briskly into the house. She looked into the library. Mrs. Horton, exhausted by her regrets and sorrow, had fallen into a heavy sleep.

Quickly Mrs. Hargrave went back and beckoned. Mr. Culver gathered Rosanna up in his arms, and with Minnie leading the way, carried her to her pretty room. She gave a sigh of happiness when she felt herself tucked into her own soft, pleasant bed, and a tear squeezed itself from under her closed lids, but it was a tear of joy.

Mrs. Hargrave returned to the library and sat down. It was a half hour before Mrs. Horton awoke.

"No news?" she asked with a groan.

"The best in the world!" said Mrs. Hargrave, patting her friend's hand. "The best in the world, Virginia, and you must take it bravely."

"Tell me quickly," begged Mrs. Horton. "They have found her? Where is my child?"

"Yes, we have found her," said Mrs. Hargrave, "and she is in her own little bed upstairs."

"Oh, oh!" cried Mrs. Horton, covering her eyes.

"She was nearly run over on Third Street, and has a pretty bad bump and a cut on her head. We found her in the hospital. No one knew who she was because she had cut off her curls, and she had on a dress I never saw before. Helen thinks it is

one she bought to give that Mary child I told you about. Now don't mind her hair, Virginia; it will grow, and *do* be gentle with her."

"Mind her hair — be gentle with her!" repeated Mrs. Horton indignantly. "I will tell you what I am going to do from this time on, and just you try to interfere if you dare! I am going to *spoil* Rosanna. I thought I was doing the right thing, and you don't know how I wanted to pet her and love her and play with her, but I was such a goose that I thought if I didn't keep her at a distance she wouldn't respect me. Why, she cares a thousand times more for you than she does for me this very minute! So you just watch me. I am going to make her love me best! I am going to begin now." She rose and started for the door.

"Don't you want to fix your hair first?" asked Mrs. Hargrave in amazement. "It is all tousled up, and your nose is red and shiny."

"It can stay so!" said the elegant Mrs. Horton. "I don't mind at all letting her see that I was breaking my heart for her. Perhaps it will help her to believe that I have one."

Followed by Mrs. Hargrave, Mrs. Horton mounted the stairs as lightly as a girl. Minnie was just coming down.

"Miss Rosanna keeps asking for you, Mrs. Horton," she said, "and the nurse thought if you would mind coming in to see her she would drop off to sleep."

"I *am* coming!" said Mrs. Horton. She entered the room, and Mrs. Hargrave again felt a keen pride in her friend. She approached the bed and, smiling down brightly, bent and kissed the little girl softly on the cheek.

"Well, darling," she said, "how are you feeling now?"

Rosanna lifted her arms. "Oh, grandmother, I am so sorry I ran away and made you so unhappy! I can see it in your face. Please forgive me! I will be such a good little girl when I get well!"

"You have always been a good little girl, my precious," said her grandmother, kneeling by the bed and laying her arm over Rosanna. "Only we didn't just understand each other, and now everything is going to be different. I want you to go to sleep now, and we can talk about everything when you are well again. And you must sleep all you can, because the very first meal you can sit up for, Helen is coming over to have with you. A party, you know, right up here. And Helen is very lonesome. Now go to sleep. Minnie, your good Minnie, will stay right with you, and I will come back soon." Once more she kissed Rosanna and silently left the room. Outside the door she turned to Mrs. Hargrave and for a moment cried soft and happy tears on her shoulder. Then the two old ladies kissed each other tenderly.

"It is going to be all right, Amanda," said Mrs. Horton.

"Indeed it is, Virginia," said Mrs. Hargrave. "I am more thankful than I can say. And now I wonder when we are going to have anything to eat. I am not sure when I had a meal last. Down at Cousin Hendy's, I believe, and as she was just coming out of one of her attacks, that was mostly prepared breakfast foods. I don't mind saying that I am starved. Do you suppose you will have enough to eat here to-night to be any inducement for me to accept your invitation for dinner when I get it?"

Half an hour later just as they sat down to the table, in walked Mrs. Horton's son Robert. Mrs. Hargrave shook her head when after the first greetings he asked for Rosanna.

"In bed," said Mrs. Horton. "I will have something to tell you about her later, Robert, but now tell us what has happened since I left you."

"The kiddie isn't in disgrace for anything, is she?" insisted Robert.

"Not at all!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "Did you find your friend?"

"I certainly did!" said the young man, smiling, "and it's a good thing too. He was hurt worse than I was, and it is going to be a long time before he will be able to do much of anything. He has a wife and a child or two, so I thought the best thing to do was to get them all down on the stock farm. That's what kept me. I went down to Lexington with them instead of coming straight home. He

took one of the kiddies with him, and the others will follow. That is a great little girl of his, mother. She told me some of the greatest yarns about what she did in an organization called the Girl Scouts. It certainly is interesting and a wonderful thing for girls. Teaches them all sorts of things, you know. Why, that child was more self-reliant than lots of the grown girls I know. You must be sure to have Rosanna join it, mother. She needs it, I feel sure. I scarcely know Rosanna, but her letters always had about as much originality as a sheet of blank paper."

"I don't think that was Rosanna's fault," said Mrs. Horton. "I think you will find her changed greatly."

"Well, however that may be, you let her join the Girl Scouts anyway. Why, the fun they get out of it is worth everything. And in summer they camp and put up jams and things, at least the group this youngster belonged to did, and she is certainly great. Such a polite little thing."

"Rosanna can invite her up here to see her," said Mrs. Horton.

"I guess you would think she was not in Rosanna's class," he said, staring at his mother.

"Class?" said Mrs. Horton. "Class has nearly wrecked my life twice; now we are going to pay some attention to worth and brains."

They were sitting in the library a little later, when John Culver entered. He did not see Robert

lounging on a divan in a dim corner of the big room as he said, "Mrs. Horton, this check that you have given me to date is made out to John Carver and of course I could not cash it."

"Isn't that the way you spell your name?" asked Mrs. Horton.

"Culver: John Winston Culver," said Culver. "J. W. Culver will do, of course."

"John Winston Culver!" cried Robert, leaping from the divan in a manner you wouldn't expect from a wounded soldier. "Not Culver, the inventor?"

"A little that way," laughed Culver, "but scarcely enough to be called *the* inventor. I wish I was!"

Robert was shaking him by the hand.

"Well, you are all right!" he said. "Why, our people in the foundry have been looking for you all over the East. What are you doing here?"

"It is too long a story to tell you now," said Mr. Culver, "but I will be more than glad to get in touch with the office if there is anything in it."

"There is a fortune in it," said Robert, "just as soon as you get the machine perfected! We must have it, and we will give you fine terms for a right to its exclusive use. What are you doing here?"

"I am your mother's chauffeur," said Mr. Culver. "I wanted something to do that would give me a good deal of leisure to work on the engine and after I came back from France we were visiting

my wife's people here and I saw your mother's advertisement and took the place."

"It is almost too good to be true!" said Robert. "If you agree, we'll work the thing out together."

Mr. Culver looked at Mrs. Horton, then at Mrs. Hargrave. "Stay; please stay!" was the message he read in both pairs of eyes.

"That will be fine," he said to Robert. "I need some help, and you are just the one to put me in the way of getting it. See you to-morrow," he added and went out, forgetting the check.

"Well, I believe in fairies now," said Robert. "Half a dozen of the biggest concerns in the country are after that young man. If I dared, I would lock him up for safe keeping. To think that he is here right on the place! Talk of luck! Why, he is worth a million dollars to us right now, with his improved engine."

"Luck; luck!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "Pretty poor luck, I call it for me!"

"Why?" asked Mrs. Horton.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" sighed Mrs. Hargrave. "Only I had it all planned to do something nice for Helen."

CHAPTER XIX

Two days went by, during which Rosanna slept most of the time or tossed about her pretty bed, unable to rest on account of the pain in her head.

Rosanna learned then, for the first time, the lesson that it is never right to run away from the duty that faces us. It came to her slowly but surely in the hours of her recovery that no good ever comes to those who shirk. If Rosanna had waited, she would have saved herself and many others a great deal of unhappiness.

Rosanna was a very little girl, yet she might have stood firm because she knew in her heart that she was not to blame and that should have given her courage. As she lay there and day by day learned from one and another the terrible suffering her running away had brought on every one, Rosanna was filled with shame and despair. How could any one, how could her grandmother ever forgive her?

And the worst of her punishment was that they would not let her talk. She wanted to beg every one who came caring for her so tenderly to forgive her, but the nurse simply would not let her say a word. No one was allowed to stay with her for

more than five minutes and then *they* did all the talking.

This did not go on long, of course. Came a day when the nurse smilingly helped her into a big lounging chair and stood by looking on while a hairdresser straightened and trimmed the haggled locks into a perfectly docked hair cut. A bang almost covered the plasters on her temple and when the task was completed, Rosanna felt very dressed up indeed.

That afternoon she saw Uncle Robert — a jolly, affectionate Uncle Robert who came to tell her a great piece of news. He had adopted a French orphan, a lovely little girl belonging to a family that had been wiped out in the war.

"She made me remember that I had a little niece over here," said Uncle Robert. "I used to tell her about you, and I know you will enjoy knowing her."

"Isn't she coming here to live?" asked Rosanna hopefully.

"I don't know yet," said Uncle Robert, frowning. "You see I have not told a soul yet excepting yourself. I don't know how that would strike mother. It seems to me that it would give her a good deal of care. Two girls to bring up, you know. Your Uncle Robert tackled a big problem when he adopted an orphan, don't you think so, Rosanna?"

"I don't think so," said Rosanna, smiling. "Orphans are real easy to keep, Uncle Robert.

You see there are not many bad ones like me."

"I won't have you say that!" said Uncle Robert, giving the hand he was holding a little shake. "I think you are a real easy orphan: easy to get along with and easy to look at and easy to keep. I hope mine will be half so good, and I hope I will love her a quarter as well as I do my niece Rosanna."

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Robert!" sighed Rosanna. "I am so glad you are home. I had forgotten how nice you are."

Uncle Robert rose. "We have said so many nice things to each other that I feel all good and happy inside," he laughed. "And before something happens to make me feel otherwise, here goes your little Uncle Bobby downstairs to talk the thing over with mother. She is in the library with Mrs. Hargrave. The fact is, Rosanna, I was so glad to be at home again and so busy with one thing and another, that I forgot all about Elise. That's her name; Elise. This morning I had a letter from the Red Cross people, and they expect to come over in a couple of weeks. So I must get busy. But honestly, Rosanna, I do think it would be pretty hard for mother to take her in. I could enter her in some good boarding-school in the city."

"But they wouldn't *love* her!" cried Rosanna. "Little girls want to be *loved.*"

Uncle Robert cleared his throat. "We will have to see to that part somehow, won't we, Rosanna? Well, I will talk to mother, and as

soon as we decide I will come and tell you about it. At least I will if you will promise to take a nap."

"I will if you will promise to wake me up."

"It's a go!" agreed Uncle Robert, and went off whistling.

Mrs. Horton heard the whistle.

"Robert has something on his mind," she said to Mrs. Hargrave. "He has whistled just like that ever since he was a tiny boy whenever he was fussed or worried or in mischief. He will come in here and tell me something; just you see if he doesn't. Well, Robert," as the young man entered, "did you find Rosanna looking pretty well?"

"Perfectly fine! That child is going to be a beauty some day, mother. I never realized how pretty she is."

"You have been gone three years, and that makes all the difference in the world in a child her age," said Mrs. Horton.

"That may be so," conceded Robert. Then he tumbled headlong into his story, and Mrs. Horton looked at Mrs. Hargrave with an amused smile.

"Well, mother, I want to 'fess up to something. I hope you will not pass judgment until I have told you the whole story. Do you both care to listen?"

Both ladies assured him that they would be delighted.

"For a couple of months I was billeted in a little French village near the border. I was fortunate to find my quarters in a house which must have been

very fine at one time. It was very nearly a ruin when I arrived but the owner, an old noblewoman, was still living in one corner and welcomed me as though she was still a woman of leisure and fortune greeting an expected and distinguished guest. She was certainly a dear old lady and we were regular pals in no time.

"She did all the work; of course there was no one to help her, except her little niece, an orphan girl about the age of Rosanna. It must have been Rosanna that made me notice her, and she was certainly a dainty little thing. The aunt was miserably ill. I got one of our doctors after her case, but he said there was no hope. She was simply burned out with the terrors and hardships she had been through. And her heart was all to the bad.

"She knew it, the plucky old dear. She was a gallant soldier, I can tell you! One night she woke me groaning. I hurried in to her and told her she must let me take care of her all I could. I told her I had a mother at home and all that sort of thing, you know, to make her easy about having me wait on her, and she was no end grateful — more than I deserved. But she worried. She knew that she didn't have the strength to go through many attacks like that, and how she did mourn over that niece. I didn't blame her, seeing the way things are over there.

"It went along two weeks more, and one night I heard a gentle tapping on the door of my room. It was Elise, the little girl. Her aunt was having another attack. I hurried in, and as soon as I saw her I knew the poor old lady was going where she would not have to slave and starve any more, and going soon. She took my hand.

"'Elise; oh, Elise!' she managed to gasp. Mother, honestly I just could *not* help it! I said, 'Don't worry, madame! I have told you of my mother and my home. I would esteem it so great a favor, such an honor, if you would give Elise to me.'"

Mrs. Horton's lip trembled. Mrs. Hargrave let two large tears slip unnoticed down her pretty, faded pink cheeks.

"Well, she died perfectly happy," continued Robert. "And there I was with a little girl on my hands! I turned her over to some women I knew in the Red Cross, and she has been well taken care of ever since. I saw her when I stopped over in Paris on my way home. Food and a little care had made her look like a different child.

"Then I sailed, and she sort of slipped my mind until this morning. I have a letter here telling me that the Red Cross friends are about to sail for home and they are bringing Elise, of course. That was the first time I really realized what I had let myself in for. I might have put her in a convent

over there if I had not promised the old lady that I would personally look after her. But I did promise!

"Now what I want is some advice. Remember, I am not asking you to have Elise here. You have Rosanna and I think that is enough. But you both must know of some nice place where she can be placed and where it would be homelike. I told Rosanna about it when I was up there just now, and she didn't want me to put her in a school. She said little girls wanted to be loved."

Mrs. Horton winced.

"Did she suggest a place for her?" she asked.

"Yes, she did," said Robert.

"Didn't she ask you to bring her here?" continued Mrs. Horton.

"Oh, Virginia, wait; *please* wait!" cried Mrs. Hargrave suddenly. "Oh, Virginia, you have Rosanna, and now Robert is home. You don't know how lonely I am. Virginia, Robert dear, you have known me all your life but I am not nearly, nearly as old as I look, and I can love. Give me your little girl, Robert! She can be your ward just the same, but let me have her for my little daughter. I am so lonely, and I will be so good to her!"

Mrs. Hargrave buried her face in her tiny handkerchief and sobbed. Robert glanced at his mother. She nodded. Robert went over to Mrs.

Hargrave and folded his strong arms round the little old lady.

"Dear old friend, how can I ever thank you?" he said. "Of course I know you will be good to the child! Elise is yours!"

CHAPTER XX

An hour later Robert went up the stairs, wounds, shell shock and all, three steps at a time! He wakened Rosanna by tickling her on the nose.

"Well, Rosanna, me dear," said her uncle in a very small-boy and frivolous manner, "there's news a-plenty for you."

"Well, honey, what's the good word?" he asked her when he had finished.

"Oh, Uncle Robert," said Rosanna, "I just never *would* believe that anything so perfectly lovely could happen out of a book. Just to think of it! What will Helen say? Of course you know, Uncle Robert, that I would have loved to have Elise here, but I just know that Mrs. Hargrave will be so happy. Her house is so big, and there are no noises in it. It always seems as though the rooms are whispering to each other."

"I know what you mean," said Robert, nodding. "I like 'em to shout; don't you?"

"Well," said Rosanna wisely, "perhaps not quite shout, but it is nice when they talk anyway. Mrs. Hargrave is always wanting to be a fairy godmother to someone, and now she can be just plain really-truly mother, and that is much nicer. I know she will love Elise, and she is so dear to lean

up against. She is always so soft and silky feeling."

"I never hoped for such luck!" said Uncle Robert. "We want to make a real little American of Elise. We will do great things for her, even if she is going to be Mrs. Hargrave's daughter. I want her to ride and swim, and do all the things you do."

"I don't swim, Uncle Robert," said Rosanna. "I wish I could! I will need to know how if she decides to let me join the Girl Scouts."

"I am no Girl Scout myself," said Uncle Robert, "but I have a medal or two for long distance swimming, and we are going to turn you into a little fish as soon and as painlessly as we can. So that's all of that! Riding, too. I know you can ride that speck of a pony out there, but you must have a horse now, a real *horse*. I meant to get each of you one but I suppose Mrs. Hargrave will think that it is her privilege to get one for Elise."

"Did you feel as though you wanted to spend as much money as two saddle horses would cost?"

"I certainly did," said Uncle Robert. "Why?"

"Well, if you do feel like that, wouldn't it be nice if Helen could have that other one?"

"Rosanna, you have got a brain," said Uncle Robert, patting her hand. "The very thing! One more thing settled. Now about this Girl Scout business. What is it, anyway?"

"I can't tell you all about it myself," said Rosanna, "but the daughter of a friend of grand-

mother's who is at the head of the troop we hope to join is coming over soon to tell me all about it."

"Another little girl?" asked Uncle Robert.

"No," said Rosanna, "she is a real grown-up young lady; quite old. About twenty, I think, but Helen has met her, and she says she is just as nice as she can be. And grandmother says so too; so it must be so."

"It is if mother says so," said Uncle Robert, smiling. "She is hard to please in the matter of 'quite old young ladies.' Well, go on."

"There is a book on that table that tells you all about it," said Rosanna. "Why, they learn to do *every*thing, Uncle Robert! And they camp out, and have meetings!"

"And passwords and secret signs and all that, I suppose," said Uncle Robert, laughing.

"You get to know lots and lots of other girls, too," said Rosanna.

"I suppose you do, you poor starved little thing!" said Uncle Robert. "Well, you are going to be one anyhow, for better or for worse, and we will run Elise in. She will have a bad time at first getting used to American children and their ways, but I want to knock off about ninety years from her score. She is too old for any use. It's awful to see a kiddie so settled and grown up."

"Mrs. Hargrave is just the one to have her then," said Rosanna, "because Mrs. Hargrave isn't any age at all, really. She looks old on the

outside, but she is just as young as Helen and me. She actually makes up things to play! And she can dress paper dolls bea-*u*-ti-fully. Elise will love her right off. Mrs. Hargrave said she wanted to be a Girl Scout herself, but she thought she wouldn't try for it because she could have more fun just visiting them at their meetings and driving out to camp with hampers of goodies. I don't think I can ever tell you, Uncle Robert, how I have wanted to join. Even now I can't feel that it will really come true. Suppose grandmother should change her mind?"

"She isn't a changeable person," said Uncle Robert, "and besides she loves you so that she would give you anything in the world that you want except perhaps an airplane."

"There is the most beautiful young lady downstairs to see you, dearie," Minnie said, as she came in and straightened Rosanna's coverlet. "She is something in the Girl Scouts, and her name is Miss Marjorie Hooker."

"That's the one!" said Rosanna, nodding to Uncle Robert. "Does grandmother say for her to come up here?"

"Just for a little while."

"Please don't go, Uncle Robert," said Rosanna as he rose. "*Please* don't go! I wouldn't know what to say to her."

"Neither would I," remarked Uncle Robert.

"But I feel scared!" pleaded Rosanna.

"So do I!" said Uncle Robert. "How do you expect me to talk to ferocious young women Scouts? Does she look very strong, Minnie? Perhaps you noticed if she was carrying a rope?"

"*Rope?*" repeated Rosanna.

"Yes," said her uncle. "I believe it is a great stunt of the Boy Scouts to learn to tie awfully hard knots and swing a lariat and all that. Perhaps the Girl Scouts do these things too. She might want to show you how it is done. I would just hate to have her tie *me* up!"

"I won't let her," promised Rosanna stoutly. "I will take care of you, Uncle Robert, no matter how big and strong she is. Bring her up, Minnie."

"You don't want to be too awful scared, Mr. Robert and Miss Rosanna dear," Minnie giggled. "For one of her size, she looks and acts real mild."

"My!" said Rosanna. "I think I know just who Miss Marjorie Hooker is. She lives round the corner on Fourth Street. She is a dark lady, and tall; taller than you. She plays golf all the time. I see her starting out with her clubs every day."

"Getting her strength up," said Uncle Robert with a mock groan. "Rosanna, I am a brave man to stay with you. What are the Girl Scouts, I'd like to know, that I should stay here and be roped?"

"Hush!" warned Rosanna. "Here they come!"

Minnie opened the door and stood aside. Uncle

Robert quickly rose, and squared his shoulders.

"Miss Hooker to see you, Miss Rosanna," said Minnie with her queer smile.

High heels clicked on the hardwood floor, and Miss Marjorie Hooker came in. Uncle Robert suddenly grasped the back of a chair as though he was afraid of falling down. Rosanna sat straight up in bed and stared with round eyes. Miss Marjorie Hooker clicked across the big room and almost shyly took Rosanna's hand.

"How do you do?" she said in a silvery, small voice that fitted her tiny self to perfection. "It is so good of you to see me!"

"W-w-won't you sit down?" asked Rosanna feebly.

Miss Hooker looked at Uncle Robert.

"This is my Uncle Robert Horton," said Rosanna prettily.

Miss Hooker bowed and smiled, showing two fairy dimples. "I thought perhaps you were the doctor," she tinkled. She sat down in the nearest chair. It was ten times too big for her, but by sitting well toward the edge, her little feet nearly touched the floor. Rosanna kept staring. Uncle Robert seemed to grow very brave. He commenced to talk to the mite and managed to treat her like a really grown-up person. Rosanna was proud of him. But was it possible that this little lady, the smallest grown person she had ever known, was really the Captain of the Girl Scouts?

"So you are going to be a Girl Scout?" said Miss Hooker, turning her dimples on Rosanna.

"I *want* to be," said Rosanna. "Do you think they will accept me?"

"I know they will be delighted to take you in; but you know that you have certain things to learn and certain preparations to make before you become a regular member."

"Yes," said Rosanna. "I have the manual here."

"The best thing is for you to read it and then I will explain anything to you that you do not understand. We *do* have such good times!"

She smiled delightfully at Rosanna and at Uncle Robert, who looked really cheered up and happy and showed no signs at all of leaving the room. Rosanna wouldn't have minded if he had. She wanted a chance to talk alone with this fairy-like creature in those ridiculously grown-up clothes.

Miss Marjorie Hooker made it quite clear that she had not come to call on Uncle Robert. She had come to see Rosanna. She made it so clear that presently Uncle Robert, who did not want to go at all, spoke of a forgotten engagement and said good-by. When he bent to kiss Rosanna, he whispered, "I don't mind being roped at all, Rosanna!" but Rosanna did not understand.

After he had gone, the fairy in the big chair seemed to grow less timid.

"I just think it is fine that you are going to be

one of us," she said, dimpling delightfully. "We do have the *best* times! Last summer we went camping on our farm out toward Anchorage. We were in a grove back of the house, and if you didn't have to go down to the house for the newspapers and milk and things, you could imagine that we were miles from everyone. Can you swim?"

"No," answered Rosanna, "but I mean to learn."

"Oh, you must!" said Miss Hooker. "Everyone should know how."

"Of course," agreed Rosanna. "And a great many people do know how, so I suppose I will be able to learn. It seems very hard."

"Not a bit of it!" trilled Miss Hooker. "I have several medals for long distance swimming myself, and I taught myself when I was just a little girl."

"You are not so very large now, are you?" ventured Rosanna.

"No, I am *not*," said Miss Hooker in what was for her quite a cross tone. "Oh, Rosanna, how I would love to be tall! There is a girl round the corner on Fourth Street, and she is about six feet tall, and I just *envy* her so! Why, what are you laughing at?"

"Oh, you please must excuse me!" begged Rosanna, "but when Minnie told us the young lady was coming to see me about the Girl Scouts, Uncle Robert and I both made up our mind that you were that tall young lady. And Uncle Robert said he was sure to be fearfully afraid of you. And in-

stead of that, you are *you,* just as sweet and little! Uncle Robert needn't be afraid a bit, need he?"

"I am not at all sure," said Miss Marjorie Hooker. "Perhaps he will have to be terribly afraid of me."

CHAPTER XXI

It was bedtime one night, and after Rosanna had been tucked in her grandmother came up. She had been doing this ever since Rosanna came home and the little girl had learned to long for the little talks they had together. But this night Mrs. Horton sat down in the big chair, and told Rosanna to come into her arms. Cuddled there on her grandmother's lap, Rosanna rested while they had a talk that neither of them ever forgot. For the first time Rosanna learned all about the little sister, and Mrs. Horton in her turn came to know something of the thoughts and loneliness and longings that go on in a little girl's mind. Rosanna told her grandmother all about it, and if Mrs. Horton hugged her so tight that it almost hurt and cried over her short hair, Rosanna felt all the happier for it.

And Mrs. Horton forgot that she was a proud and haughty lady (indeed she was really never that again) and told Rosanna how sorry she was that she had been unloving because she had really never meant her cold manner. She made Rosanna understand that she had always loved her but never, never so deeply or so tenderly as now. And Rosanna begged her forgiveness for running away, and for cutting off her hair. So by-and-by they

commenced to talk of happier things, feeling very near and dear to each other the while.

It was such a wonderful talk that Rosanna felt that never again would she be unhappy.

Before her grandmother left, she told Rosanna that Helen was coming over the following day to take luncheon with her. Minnie had a table set in the broad bay window, and there the luncheon was spread. They scarcely ate at first, they were so glad to see each other. Almost the first thing that Rosanna asked was news of Gwenny. Helen had seen her often and her mother thought that she was slowly growing worse. Helen had been to a meeting at the Girl Scouts and had told them about Gwenny. Perhaps something would be done a little later. Tommy was just as selfish as ever. Helen said it was awfully hard not to dislike him.

"I don't even *try* to like him," said Rosanna. "I don't see how you can be as good and kind as you are, Helen."

"Why, I don't like the feeling it gives me when I dislike people," said Helen.

"How do you feel?" asked Rosanna. "I never thought about how it makes *me* feel."

"I don't know as I can tell exactly," said Helen, thinking hard. "Sort of as though you were walking over rough cobblestones. I just don't like it. And I feel as though it does something to my color. Just as though I was all lovely pink or blue, and

hating or disliking someone made me turn the most horrid sort of plum color."

"How funny you are, Helen! When are you going away on your Girl Scout camping trip? Isn't it almost time?"

Helen looked embarrassed. "I am not going," she said.

"Not *going?*" echoed Rosanna. "Oh, Helen, how *awful!* And you have been planning so long for that. Why are you going to give it up?"

"I just changed my mind," she said.

"You don't change it away from such a lovely trip if you can help it," Rosanna persisted. "Helen, I believe — Helen, I want you to tell me the truth now. I declare I believe you have given it up on account of *me!*"

"Well, then I have," said Helen. "Indeed, Rosanna, I would not have a good time at all off on that trip knowing that you were here just getting well and perhaps missing me. I couldn't do it!"

Rosanna could hardly speak.

"I just think you are a real true friend, Helen!" she said finally. "I don't think you ought to give up your good times and I can't thank you enough."

"I wouldn't enjoy it without you," persisted Helen. "Aren't you thrilled about your uncle's little orphan? And did you ever see anyone so happy as Mrs. Hargrave?"

"Never!" said Rosanna. "She has been telling

me all about the room she is having decorated. It must be *too* beautiful!"

"It is," said Helen. "I went over there the other day and saw it. You never saw anything so cunning in your life. All the furniture is enameled cream color, with lovely little wreaths of flowers on it. Even her brush and comb and those things are painted ivory. And the walls! In each corner is a little cottage, right on the wall paper you know, Rosanna, and between just woods that look as though you were seeing them through a mist — sort of delicate and far away. And the rugs are a soft delicate green like the grass in spring. I hope she is lovely enough for all the love Mrs. Hargrave is going to give her."

"Uncle Robert says she is as sweet as she can possibly be," Rosanna assured her. "Well, you are just too good to stay at home with me, Helen. It won't be long before we are both Girl Scouts. And I think you are just as good and sweet as you can be. I can't think what I would have done without you. But here you are actually giving up your camping for me."

Rosanna leaned over and impulsively kissed her guest.

"Dear Helen, I am *so* happy," she said, "because now I know that I am really your *best* friend."

THE END